

Tantric Buddhist Apologetics
or
Antinomianism as a Norm
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ABSTRACT: This thesis poses the question of Tantric Buddhist apologetics: how did the authors of that tradition, named and anonymous, respond to the need felt to justify their religious practices, inasmuch as those appeared anomalous within the larger context of Buddhism in India?

The subtitle signals my ancillary theme herein, on the nature of the Tantric Buddhist system: to what extent can it be described as antinomianism as a norm?

In addition to the undated scriptural Tantras themselves, our principal Sanskrit sources belong to the culmination of Indian Higher Tantric Buddhist exegesis between the tenth and twelfth centuries AD. One previously unpublished text, the *Abhiṣekanirukti*, particularly important for its rare analysis of the problematic sexual initiation, is translated in full as an Appendix. Also studied are the Tibetan translation of the *Nayatrāyapradīpa*, a work which is not known to survive in Sanskrit, as well as the famous *Bodhipathapradīpa* (with auto-commentary, both preserved only in Tibetan), composed on the request of a Tibetan king.

In the Introduction I set the scene for the main topics with a presentation of related issues in the early Buddhism of the Pāli Canon and in the Mahāyāna, historically intermediary between 'early' and Tantric Buddhism.

Part I assesses the relationship of these three Buddhisms, from the point of view of proponents of the later developments: did they, and can we, perceive a unity in the whole?

With Part II the central paradigm of my thesis is broached. How did Tantric Buddhist commentators describe the function of their sexual initiations; were they considered essential to the religion; and if so, how to proceed when the candidate is a monastic, *a priori* celibate?

The Conclusion returns to the two title phrases and reconsiders their aptness for representing this dissertation's aims and results.

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Figure I: These reliefs precede my dissertation because they graphically illustrate the way that sensual relationships were long incorporated at the heart of even monastic Buddhist institutions. Erotic (*maithuna*) carvings are everywhere in the artistic decoration of temples and monasteries, in the city-state of Nagarjunakonda, for example (DUTT 1962, plate 6), or at Ajanta (GHOSH 1967, plate M). The sculpture above is from the left-hand door-jamb of a monastic cell in the southern suite of Monastery 45 at Sanchi (photo author; cf. DUTT 1973:53-56).



Figure II: The above sculpture is from the right-hand door-jamb of the antechamber of the inner sanctum of Temple 45 at Sanchi (photo author).

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Introduction

Introduction

‘BUDDHIST’ may be the best understood and least problematic of the three words in the title of this work, ‘Tantric Buddhist Apologetics’. In indigenous Indian etymological terms the analogous Sanskrit *bauddha* is analysed as ‘the teachings of the Buddha’ (*tena proktam*; AṣṭĀdh 4.3.101), or with reference to a person, ‘one who studies or knows the same’ (*tad adhīte tad veda*; AṣṭĀdh 4.2.59, with 4.2.60: *proktau luk*). Our Buddhism is, however, based on revelations granted not so much by Siddhārtha Śākyamuni in the fifth century BC, but on scripture revealed later and in the form of Tantras by a large cast of Buddha-beings.

‘Tantric Buddhism’ is then a special instance of Buddhism. ‘Tantric’ is not the transcription of a native term, but a rather modern coinage, if not totally occidental. For the equivalent Sanskrit *tāntrika* is found, but not in Buddhist texts. *Tāntrika* is a term denoting someone who follows the teachings of scriptures known as Tantras, but only in Śaivism, not Buddhism (although cf. the single known occurrence in a copper-plate inscription from Nālandā made in the name of the Javanese king Devapāla in the ninth century AD: *tāntrikabodhisattvagaṇasya*;¹ SIRCAR 1983:II.37–38; ref. provided by SANDERSON). Indeed, Alexis SANDERSON has noted that it is usually used of followers of another tradition, by proponents of the Trika of practitioners of the Bhairava tantras, for example, and thus with a slightly pejorative tone, unlike the simple noun *tantra* (personal communication).

Tantric Buddhism is a name for a phenomenon which calls itself, in Sanskrit, Mantranaya, Vajrayāna, Mantrayāna or Mantramahāyāna (and apparently never Tantrayāna). Its practitioners are known as *mantrins*, yogis, or *sādhakas*. Thus, our use of the anglicised adjective ‘Tantric’ for the Buddhist religion taught in Tantras is not native to the tradition, but is a borrowed term

1 *tāntrika*- corr. ed.: transcribed *tāmtraka*-

which serves its purpose. Furthermore, there is a series of types of Buddhist Tantras, which have been classified differently over time (cf. below p.68ff.), so that 'Tantric' is still an exceedingly broad grouping.

What the above working title in fact does is to triangulate an area of study, with 'Apologetics' as the third and key signifying parameter. Apologetics is both the question and the answer. I ask whether practitioners of Tantric Buddhism were conscious of the difficulty many within their own religion and without would have with particular practices, and whether such consciousness did in turn compel the formulation of a reasoned defence against charges of delinquency. I let them speak for themselves, presenting such Tantric Buddhist justification. This is their apologetic indeed, but far from in the sense of 'regretfully acknowledging or excusing an offence or failure' (OED, s.v., meaning 1).

If Tantric Buddhism is compromising enough for its beliefs and practices to need apologetic justification- whether directed towards outsiders, or practitioners themselves-, then those extraordinary aspects, otherwise illicit, can in certain respects be argued to be essential to the religion's system, which in turn means that the phenomenon may also be described as one of antinomianism as a norm.

It is certainly the case that strands of the apologetic are what might be called 'strong' antinomianism. This is something quite other than 'weak' antinomianism, which only seeks to make one exempt from the conventions of society, even those encoded in a rule of law, immune to retribution, and free to perform any nefarious act. The strong form is different, for it goes further and insists on antisocial behaviour, thereby entailing the paradox of a rule of lawlessness. The demand is that one break totally with convention, going out of one's way to offend, and necessarily doing what in other contexts is wrong (cf. HAYES 1999).

All of this begs the question: which rules are being rejected? Laws are not universal, nor presumably is the morality they are intended to enshrine. Even within one local culture there may be different prescriptions for adults and children, for men and women, for citizens and outsiders. We will consider the situation for monks on the one hand, and lay practitioners on the other, leaving aside the notion of (hypothetical) natural human law, i.e. that which we here and now perhaps share with both the preceding sets, where the shock value of an action or idea may be most violent.

Our study has two axes of interest: the scale between strong and weak antinomianism; and the range from specialised discipline to the most general morality.

To a certain extent such research is circular, but not viciously so. Tantric Buddhism will have to justify contravention of specific rules of monastic law only if monks wish or are wished to become practitioners; and moreover, one would only be forced definitively to demonstrate the lack of culpability in illegal behaviour if such action is itself unavoidable according to the tradition, i.e. if we have a case of strong antinomianism. That is to say that two of my major themes will be to assess to what extent Tantric Buddhism was a monastic phenomenon in medieval India, and, on the other axis, in how far Tantric Buddhism was antinomian. In this way I intend to argue that the study of theoretical positions about what is or is not to be done will reveal a picture of what was or was not done. It is, for example, a familiar historical method to deduce that what is proscribed is what was happening. The circularity is that our knowledge of the historical situation will at the same time be invaluable for understanding contemporary debates about theory.

Yet so far we have not discussed what shape the abnormalities of Tantric Buddhism take. We will begin by assessing what the

tradition says about itself, first of all in the most general terms of its relationship to the rest of Buddhism. The Mantranaya considers itself to partake of many of the defining features of the Mahāyāna, which in turn sees itself as Buddhist, but with certain provisos setting it apart from (and above) the earlier Śrāvaka- or Hīnayāna.

It is striking that Indian Buddhists of other schools, whether Mahāyāna or not, did not compose attacks on the Mantranaya. If they did, none seem to have survived (although we will consider the case of political criticism in Tibet, cf. below p.253). One would expect to find Buddhist texts accusing the Tantrics of not being Buddhist; after all, that charge is made again and again in the modern secondary literature, whether the imposter is identified as an import smuggled in from Śaivism or as sprung from some other hypothetical common indigenous rootstock. Moreover, a certain amount of polemic against the Mantranaya is found in non-Buddhist sources, such as Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodāya* (LINDTNER 1994:19–20) and stories in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (eg. KaSaSā 7.4.63–68); and Jayantabhaṭṭa's *Nyāyamañjarī* and *Āgamadāmbara* (RUEGG 1981a:221–222) do satirise unspecified Tantric practices.

One exception to the absence of Buddhist hostility towards Tantric Buddhism is the Tibetan reports referred to by Debala MITRA:

The radically-reoriented religion evoked protests from the orthodox monks of Ceylon and Sindh. According to the Tibetan monk Dharmasvāmin (p.64) and Lāmā Tāranātha, the Ceylonese Śrāvakas at Vajrāsana described Vajrayāna as being foreign to the teachings of the Buddha. They put into fire many mantra books, destroyed the silver image of Heruka and tried to convince the pilgrims about the uselessness of the Vajrayāna teachings. (MITRA 1971:19, cited by SANDERSON 1994:fn.36)

It is possible that the esoteric nature of the Mantranaya may have

meant that on the whole other Buddhists were kept in the dark about what does before all portray itself as a secret cult.

The traditional and modern obfuscating protective wrapping of this religion should in particular be noted as one obstacle proper to our own enquiry. Indeed, I have been threatened with what I call the Valley of the Kings syndrome. As with the torments of discoverers of the lost world of Egyptian monumental tombs at the beginning of our century (FAGAN 1996:105–115), the study of Mantranaya texts can be fatal, or lead at the very least to madness. That is what I have heard. But the danger is said to be defused when one has collected the prescribed initiations (*abhiṣeka*, *dbang bskur*), permissions (*adhiṣṭhāna*, *byin brlabs*) and oral individual guidance, from the all-important teacher or guru.

Anecdotal evidence aside Tantric Buddhism differentiates itself from the rest of Buddhism in its emphasis on the role of one's human teacher. Making the guru the guardian of wisdom appears to contradict the spirit of earlier Buddhism. For the Buddha famously instructed his followers, in his last words of counsel and commiseration, to be islands (or lamps: Pāli *dīpa*; DN ii.100) to themselves, independent agents on the path; he repeatedly recommended that noone should blindly accept his word; and most importantly, the Dharma he realised and taught is described as *ehi-passiko* (lit. come-seeable), open to all. However, he was many times portrayed as the guide, and the Dharma is defined as that which was realised by him.

Entry to the Saṃgha was open to anyone on application, within limits set out openly in the *upasampadā* ceremony, limits which rest on public criteria. But entry into the Tantric Buddhist religion was not freely available to every enthusiast. There was a rigorous assessment procedure for candidates. They were thus totally dependent on the judgement of their teacher, and explicitly so. The passage into full membership was mediated by ritual and

complex initiation. Moreover, such initiation stands out for its transgressive character, namely its rites involving sexual relations. So it is the perfect subject of study for us. What better place to start than where an aspirant to the religion begins? This is especially true given that it is the point of transformation to becoming a member of the esoteric tradition, the final moments of exoteric identity. And of course, it is the illicit acts of the ritual which are particularly intriguing, since they must surely evoke apologetics.

Erotic relationships are extraordinary inasmuch as they require regulation in every human society, whether celibate or not. But what is *prima facie* more incongruous in a Buddhist context is the employment of any form of ritual in the first place, let alone its emphasis. What needs to be justified is both the transformative power of bizarre behaviour as a special instance, and prior to that the very principle of such efficacy of action (as opposed to mental cultivation).

The Buddha excluded attachment to ritual— along with attachment to other worldly activity— with the assertion:

By action I mean intention, oh monks!

(*cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi*; AN iii.415)

He proclaimed the futility of making sacrifices in order to win heaven and warned against meaningless action such as society's cry of 'Bless you!' (lit. 'Live long', *jivātu*; Vin. ii.140) for a sneeze. In the formulation of the evolution of an 'individual,' which is the first thing to be studied on the Buddhist path, the twelve links of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*, also called *nidāna*, 'the basis'), clinging (*upādāna*) is taught to condition becoming (*bhava*). In a Dīgha Nikāya *sutta* on the subject (*Mahānidānasutta* DN 15) clinging is glossed as clinging to the objects of the senses, views and, 'grasping after rite and ritual' (*sīlabbatupadāna*; DN ii.57–58; cf. also PTSD s.v. for the 'old form *sīlavata* which still preserves original good sense [viz. good works and ceremonial

observances], as much as “observing the rules of good conduct”.’).

Since all activity is mental before physical or vocal, it is the mind which needs to be understood and trained. The physical world is not relevant to spiritual progress; nor is the magical world of the religion of ritual, which is not even causally logical. Ritual is *per se* customary observance; it is to be performed without reasoning why, just because. The Buddha was concerned in his teaching with the law of cause and effect. It is difficult to make ritual action conform to such a law, as he demonstrated. Yet we shall see how Tantric Buddhist authors contrived to do exactly that.

Such an objection, that ritual is not Buddhist, may be inaccurate, taking a selection of *sūtras* and Vinaya too literally. Actual practice probably could not, or even did not want, to abandon a local technology which had some claim to success, that of accepted usage. In the context of the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, and surviving works of material culture, there is an enormous amount of evidence for devotional and cultic practices. From the earliest times there are reliefs of what can only be a tree cult, and likewise with the worship of stūpas, the monumental reliquaries of first the historical Buddha and then other saints, a form of worship sanctioned by the Buddha himself in the Pāli Canon. But these devotional practices are perhaps not the same as ritual. Thus, the contemporary ninth Aśokan rock edict relegates the ritual (*mamgala*) of the life-cycle to a vain effort with merely mundane fruit, differentiating it from devotion (*dhammamamgala*; lit. religious ritual: the good treatment of slaves and servants, honouring teachers, self-control before living beings and making donations to brahmins and ascetics), which certainly produces endless merit in other worlds, and may also incidentally bear fruit in this world (BLOCH 1950:113–117).

What distinguishes both the Aśokan forms of ritualistic ac-

tivity from meaningful exertion in meditation and study is the nature of the goal. In the former case it is merit, heaven, or special powers, in the latter nothing less than enlightenment. Justification is required in Tantric Buddhism because the Mantranaya claims to be soteriologically efficacious, i.e. to bring one to the highest goal. That is true exclusively for what we shall call Higher Tantric Buddhism, revealed in the Yoga, Mahāyoga, Yoginī or Yogānuttara/Yoganiruttara Tantras, as opposed to that of the earlier Kriyā and Caryā classes.

In Higher Tantric Buddhism both powers (*siddhi*) and supreme enlightenment may be won. Yet noteworthy in its absence is a distinction prevalent in esoteric lefthand Śaivism, namely that between one initiated as a *bubhukṣu*, who is desirous of the enjoyment (*bhoga* from the root *bhuj*) of powers, and the *mumukṣu*, who is set on liberation (*mokṣa* from the root *muc*). Similarly contrasting is the Śaivite fundamental claim for their initiation (*dīkṣā*), namely that it is in itself salvific. At the very instant of initiation the bonds on the soul are irreversibly severed, one is liberated, and all that remains is enough impurity to maintain the connection between one's human body and soul for the allotted life-span. As far as I know, such a directly causal force, as sufficient liberating cause, is never attributed to the initiation (*abhiṣeka*) of Tantric Buddhism. Instead the relationship of initiation to path to goal is more subtle, as we shall see.

To make a generalisation for our purposes, whether Buddhism is originally pro- or anti-ritualist, depends again on the sliding scale of status and hence duty defined above. A lay Buddhist would never have been expected to renounce his rites of the life-cycle, and there is a Buddhist version of the brahmanical *śrāddha* funeral ceremonies. While monks could officiate at *preta* ceremonies, alone of all the life crisis rituals, they were not to perform rituals to increase their own or the monastery's wealth,

or to bring the local king victory in battle. These illustrate an important further discriminating variable which appears to be an innovation of Mahāyāna Buddhism, terminologically at least: whether an act is performed for the benefit of oneself (*svārtha*) or for another's sake (*parārtha*).

In the Śrāvakayāna, and notoriously according to polemical commentators, it went beyond the call of duty to concern oneself overmuch with the enlightenment of others (although Śākyamuni was himself, of course, so concerned; cf. the interesting passage in the *Brāhmaṇavagga Sutta* A I 168, discussed by GOMBRICH (1987:75–76)). It was every practitioner for himself; and that seemed rational in the sense that one should only really be able to help oneself. However, not only were monks often as concerned as the laity were with generating merit for themselves, but there is also the interesting phenomenon of the so-called 'transfer of merit', with laymen rewarded for their tangible patronage of the Saṃgha with 'a kind of spiritual cash' (GOMBRICH 1988:125).

With the Mahāyāna was introduced the concept of a Bodhisattva career, broader in reference than Śākyamuni Buddha's previous lives as a Bodhisattva Buddha-to-be. That is why it is called the Great Way or Vehicle, because it is conceived as an enormous people-carrier conveying all together to enlightenment, if only after aeons of striving by dedicated bodhisattvas who aim at the new goal of *nirvāṇa in dynamis* (*apratīṣṭhitanirvāṇa*) in order to remain active within *saṃsāra* so as to bring all others to join them. And that is why we see the pejorative name Hīnayāna used by some— in fact, very few— in the Mahāyāna for what is otherwise known as the Śrāvakayāna. That is derisively called the Deficient Vehicle because it does not carry all together to enlightenment. The name Śrāvakayāna refers to the opportunity we all have to hear (root *śru*) the words of Śākyamuni, for he endowed our age with his teachings.

So the Mahāyāna is about more than self-help. Robert THURMAN has classed it as ‘Messianic Buddhism’, in the ‘universalistic style’ (THURMAN 1995:16). Eventually everyone should take the Bodhisattva vow, making everyone a budding Messiah. Indeed, the Hebrew title means ‘anointed one’, a concept we shall meet again, with the initiations (*abhiṣeka*) of Tantric Buddhism. And moreover, when we analyse how Mantranaya theorists assessed their relationship to the Mahāyāna, of which they saw themselves as a part, they too will turn out to be dedicated Bodhisattvas. But it is possible that this was not the case originally in Tantric Buddhism, and that question will be part of this study.

Whether or not a practitioner of Tantric Buddhism is also a Bodhisattva can be decisive, both in terms of apologetics as well as the distinction between acting for one’s own benefit and that of another. For Mahāyāna Buddhism promotes a partially relativist ethic, which one might even describe as utilitarian. The tradition knows this as skilful means, or more precisely ‘skilfulness in means’ (*upāyakaśālyā*). But what about the ethical rectitude of a Śrāvaka in the first place?

Buddhist Core Morality

There are five precepts (*śīla* or *śikṣāpada*) which are at the very basis of a monk’s discipline, though not its sum. Moreover, they are binding on the laity in a way equivalent to the ten commandments of Christianity. One makes a pledge to refrain absolutely from: killing (*prāṇātīpāta*), theft (*adattādāna*), sexual misbehaviour (*kāmeṣu mithyācāra*), lying (*mṛṣāvāda*) and intoxication by liquor (*surāmaireyamadyapramādashāna*) (BHSD s.v. *śikṣāpada*). Only the first four are consistent in the variety of Buddhist formulations, with the single amendment for a monastic, or temporarily for the laity, that the third becomes the vow of sexual abstinence (*brahmacarya*). *Brahmacarya* is a term taken over

from the brahminical institution of either, classically, a period of celibacy when a student, or as an option of celibacy for life, the latter of which was probably historically the original arrangement (OLIVELLE 1993:30 and 73–III).

All of these primary rules of conduct are found equally in the brahminical lawbooks. This is no surprise, since they could even be said to represent a universal ethical code, found wherever man lives in society; which is precisely why we are interested in whether and why they may be broken. The legitimised amendment of a rule is of course equally human: killing in the form of capital punishment, especially for the crime of murder, for example. But the reasons for such variations often produce a paradox: killing is so bad that we must be good and kill anyone who kills someone. Here there is a double coincidence, for the subject of our investigation is antinomianism, the transgression of laws, while the making of that into a law, and the logical contradiction in the sentence before last, are examples of antinomy, a paradox.

In the institution of capital punishment, the abuse of the laws of logic (as well as the harm done to the criminal) is outweighed by the alleged need to protect society from the known killer as well as to intimidate potential offenders. Since the protection of the public could be equally well-served by life-imprisonment, as could the prolonged punishment of the offender, it is the lesson and warning to others in seeing a murderer killed which has been held up as the main justification for capital punishment. In fact, statistics comparing states with and without Death Row in the U.S.A. show no noticeable variation in frequency of offence (cf. <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/deter.html>, which also reports on the ‘brutalization effect’: research indicating ‘that executions may actually increase the number of murders’). The questionable value of shock-treatment such as this may be one of the principles at the root of both Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhist antinomian-

ism, with the major added difference in the latter that one could also be said to be treating oneself with the shock.

In addition to the five Buddhist precepts listed above, there are also larger groups of eight or ten, expansions on the basic five. The *Aṣṭaṅgaśīla* adds the renunciation of: eating at the wrong time, a variety of entertainments and adornments, and high beds. The group of ten simply divides entertainment and adornment into two and introduces the prohibition on handling gold or silver. A layperson would take these during a day or period of emphatic religious observance (*upoṣadha*), and so they include the amended strict, if temporary, commitment to chastity.

A different kind of formulation is that of the *Prātimokṣa*, the extensive set of rules which comprises the monastic discipline to which one is committed by ordination. It is a negative code, since the rules are classified in terms of the level of punishment their infringement entails. There the four most serious crimes (*pārājika*), upon commission of which one is automatically cast out of the order, are: sexual intercourse, theft, murder and gossiping about superhuman powers (*uttaramanusyaṃpralāpa*; BHSD s.v. *pārājika*). The first three *pārājikas* are in reverse order when compared with the precepts, emphasising chastity before not committing theft, and that before murder. The most likely explanation is that the *Prātimokṣa* recognises that a monk is psychologically and in practice more likely to fail on the first or the second than the third. The groupings of the precepts, on the other hand, acknowledge that their first and second, murder and theft, are more radically unethical than the so very human inclination to sexual (mis-)behaviour.

The final of these three collections of what one might normally call Buddhist core morality are the ten good paths of action (*kuśalakarmapatha*). The first four are the same as those of the precepts. These are then extended so as to give a total of three bodily acts, four of speech and three of mind. So much for the

core morality to which one might expect every kind of Buddhist to abide. But what about the 'skilful means' of the Mahāyāna?

Mahāyāna Ethics

In order to map out the historical context of antinomianism in Tantric Buddhism, we must first take into account the Mahāyāna position. Before considering in what ways Tantric Buddhism claimed its superiority over the rest of Mahāyāna Buddhism, we need first to consider the parallel distinctions which set the Mahāyāna apart from and above the Śrāvakayāna. The Mahāyāna is for Bodhisattvas who are busy not only with perfecting their own persons, but also with promoting the progress of others. Having two aims leads to conflict if one is forced to choose between them. The rhetoric of the Mahāyāna is clear: once one has reached a certain level of development oneself, the welfare of others must have top priority. But that will inevitably sometimes entail personal compromise, ethical compromise, since what is demanded is a mode of conduct in conflict with one's own ideal morality. Skilful means is the solution which facilitates a bodhisattva's ethical compromise.

Damien KEOWN discusses this feature and its context in the chapter on Mahāyāna ethics in his book 'The Nature of Buddhist Ethics' (1992). However, his treatment is a little muddled, and as he says at the very beginning of his chapter 'Ethics in the Mahāyāna':

The nature of Mahāyāna ethics is complex and there is evidence of development in a number of directions, at times contradictory ones. (1992:129)

The structure of KEOWN's chapter is modelled on that of the *Mahāyānasamgraha* by Asaṅga. That well-known text is unfortunately known to survive only in Chinese and Tibetan translations, although its translator, Etienne LAMOTTE, has restored

many Sanskrit words, from citations and as hypothetical reconstructions. It is a summary (*saṃgraha*) of what is so great about the Mahāyāna, morality and all, and why it is superior to the Śrāvakayāna. In the chapter on ‘The Observance of High Morality’ (MaSaṃ VI, *adhiśīlaṃśikṣā*; LAMOTTE 1939:212–217) there are four features which set Mahāyāna ethics apart, namely its superiority in 1. classifications (*prabhedaviśeṣa*), 2. common and specific rules (*sādhāraṇāsādhāraṇaśikṣāviśeṣa*), 3. breadth (*vaipulyaviśeṣa*), and 4. depth (*gāmbhīryaviśeṣa*) (KEOWN 1992:136 without textual reference).

The text glosses the second distinction of having both common and specific rules as referring to the difference between the innately reprehensible (*prakṛtisāvadya*) and the conventionally reprehensible (*pratikṣepaṇasāvadya*), translated by KEOWN as Serious and Minor Offences (1992:137). LAMOTTE translates *pratikṣepaṇasāvadya* as transgressions of disobedience (lit. sins...: péchés de désobéissance; 1939:214). This term refers to activity which is reprehensible inasmuch as it goes against or rejects (root *pratiksip*) a Vinaya rule, i.e. a convention. Both Śrāvakas and Bodhisattvas have in common (*sādhāraṇa*) the prohibition on the innately reprehensible, while a Śrāvaka is in addition forbidden the conventionally reprehensible which a Bodhisattva may under particular (*asādhāraṇa*) conditions commit (MaSaṃ VI.3, cited KEOWN 1992:146).

The *Mahāyānasamgraha* summarises:

In short (*samāsataḥ*), Bodhisattvas can perform and carry out any bodily, vocal or mental act (*kāyavāgmanaskarma*) helpful to beings (*sattvopakāra*) provided it is irreproachable (*niravadya*). (VI.3; LAMOTTE’s translation, cited by KEOWN 1992:147)

The first question begged is: what is innately reprehensible and what irreproachable, what quite out of the question even for bodhisattvas and what permissible? KEOWN’s response is that:

The serious offences are transgressions of what we have called the 'core morality' of Buddhism as seen, for instance, in the Five Precepts, or at least the first four of them.... Care is taken specifically to exclude from this provision [of flexibility] acts of a grave or serious nature, and there is no suggestion that a breach of the fundamental moral precepts would be countenanced. (1992:149)

In fact, this is exactly the sort of statement which would be contradicted in whatever Mahāyāna source one might initially find it. KEOWN is himself flexible and comments:

[S]erious offences relate most probably to the violation of the Ten Good Paths of Action or *pārājika*-type offences. (1992:147).

It is important to reconsider KEOWN's claims, because he seems to have missed the point of Mahāyāna ethics. He does use the key-word when describing:

[T]he twofold stipulation that (a) the act should benefit others; and (b) it should be performed from an irreproachable (*niravadya*) motive. (1992:149, without source),

before going on to make the above-quoted statement that serious offences are specifically excluded. The key-word is motive. That is the essence of the Mahāyāna's 'paradigm shift' (KEOWN 1992:130), whereby the classic Buddhist position according to which thought (or intention: *cetanā*) is prior to and responsible for any action, is drawn to its logical conclusion. The terminological change of emphasis in the Mahāyāna which eventually replaced the ethics (*śīla*) of the Śrāvakayāna, morality *per se*, with means (*upāya*), or compassion (*karuṇā*), was part of the development which insisted that one act in the interest of others. Means or compassion are paired with wisdom (*prajñā*), as was *śīla* before. If one's motive is compassion then why should any act be illicit, since its physical performance is morally as nothing compared to its mental inception?

Tantric sources themselves, especially the later and more scholastic treatises, find support for their seemingly illegal practices in the attitude of Mahāyāna ethics, and cite many a verse from Mahāyāna *sūtras* and basic instruction texts such as Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and anthological *Śikṣāsamuccaya*. We will repeatedly return in this thesis to Mahāyāna antecedents of Tantric Buddhism.

KEOWN implied that there is such a thing as Buddhist basics which are not to be tampered with. The other main source for his exposition, in addition to the *Mahāyānasamgraha*, is the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, the only *bhūmi* of Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmi* known to have survived in Sanskrit. It contains some perhaps startling statements, already well-known.

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* has a chapter on ethics (*śīlapaṭala*), which describes itself as a *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* (BoBhū 157.15; KEOWN 1992:136). This *Bodhisattvapiṭaka* is an unsystematised collection of *śikṣāpadas*. It seems to be designed as a substitute for, or supplement to, the Śrāvaka Vinaya, for the new category of practitioner, Bodhisattvas. Thus, for example, it has a set of four offences (*pārājayikasthānīyadharmā*, BoBhū 158; KEOWN 1992:142) parallel to the Śrāvaka *pārājikas* listed above, but by which one ineluctably ceases to be a Bodhisattva (as opposed to incurring expulsion from the Saṃgha). But these are for their part curiously tangential to what one might normally consider ethically fundamental. They are: pride and disparaging of others out of greed for gain and fame; selfish hoarding of goods and teachings; reacting with anger and violence to others; and, typically for a Mahāyāna text, repudiating the same *Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. This set of rules may not have been intended to stand alone, but to function as a set of specialised amendments to the Vinaya. They address not morality *per se*, but the pitfalls a Bodhisattva must be on the lookout for. He must be prevented from attitudes or actions which might

imply or manifest a lack of care for others.

Important further amendments demand the contravention of what we have identified as Buddhist core morality, lay and monastic. In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* a set of seven permitted deeds expressly enact the contrary of the first seven good paths of action:

There are certain innately reprehensible acts (*kiṃcit prakṛtisāvadyam*), which a Bodhisattva may perform with such skillful means that he is free of fault (*anāpattiḥ*) and [even] generates much merit (*bahu ca puṇyam prasūyate*). (BoBhū 165–6).

First in the list is that one may kill in order to save someone from himself if he is on the point of committing one of the five heinous acts which bring immediate retribution (*ānantaryakarma*), beginning with parricide. The Bodhisattva is said to make a selfless calculation, thinking to himself:

Never mind that I will go to hell.
(*kāmaṃ bhavatu me narakopapattiḥ*; BoBhū 166)

This calculus of benefit is what is comparable to a utilitarian reckoning of the greater good, or rather, here, putting the benefit of others, even that of a single potential criminal, over one's own. But the generous Bodhisattva would not even have his sums right, for by virtue of his compassionate state of mind (*anukāṃpācittam ev' āyatyām upādāya*; *ibid.*), he is free of fault and acquires much merit, and does not risk rebirth in a hell. Similarly, a Bodhisattva may depose a cruel ruler and repossess property taken from the Saṃgha (forms of theft, taking liberties with a position, or goods, that are not given) (BoBhū 166–7).

Next, and crucial for our study of Tantric Buddhist initiations, a house-holder (*gṛhī*) Bodhisattva may have sex (*maithunadharmeṇa niṣevate*) with an unmarried woman (*aparaparigṛhītaṃ mātr-grāmam*) who is besotted with him (*tatpratibaddhacittam*). In this way she can be saved from her own anger if rejected, and from resulting loss of the roots of goodness. However, she may

only be rescued if no other convention, such as her being married to another, stands in the way. The paragraph ends with the proviso that a monk (*pravrajitasya punar*) Bodhisattva who honours (*anurakṣamāṇasya*) the Śrāvakayāna Vinaya (*śrāvakaśāsanabhedam*) should never consider (*sarvathā na kalpate*) such a non-celibate pursuit (*abrahmacaryaniṣevanam*) (BoBhū 167).

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi*'s ruling is remarkably close to that in the section on a courtesan's 'Calculating Gains and Losses, Consequences and Doubts' (chapter 6) in the *Kāmasūtra*:

The doubt is: Will I serve religion or violate it if I go, on the sympathetic advice of a friend, to a Brahmin who knows the Veda, or to a man who is under a vow of chastity or consecrated for a sacrifice, or a man who has taken a vow or who wears the sign of a religious order, if he has seen me and conceived a passion for me and wants to die? (transl. DONIGER O'FLAHERTY (unpubl.))

(*śrotṛiyasya brahmacāriṇo dīkṣitasya vratino līngino vā māṃ dṛṣtvā jātārāgasya mumūrṣor mitravākyaḍ ānṛṣaṃsyāc ca gamanaṃ dharmo 'dharma iti saṃśayaḥ*. KāSū 6.6.29)

Yaśodhara's commentary glosses:

He wants to die because he has reached the final stage of desire.
(*martum icchoḥ kāmasyāvasthā 'ntaraprāptatvād*. ad loc.)

and at the beginning of the chapter glosses 'compassion':

Compassion is taking pity on someone who says, 'I will die if you will not make love with me'.
(*anukampā: akāmayamānāyāṃ tvayi mriye 'ham ity evaṃ vādini dayā bhavati*. ad KāSū 6.1.17)

The remaining entries in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* make the allowance simply for a bodhisattva, without specifying his status. He may: lie to save beings from death or harm; slander the bad

friends (*akalyāṇamitra*, *pāpamitra*) of others so as to separate them; be cruel to be kind and prevent someone's bad behaviour; and sing, dance and chatter in order to convert those who are attracted by entertainment (BoBhū 167–168; listed by KEOWN, 1992:143).

This is a controversial code, whether one is a monk, a layman, or not even a Buddhist. At the beginning of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*'s section on ethics it is stated to apply equally to lay householders (*grhipakṣa*) and renunciate monks (*pravrajitapakṣa*) (BoBhū 138), although we have seen that the rule about sex did not apply equally. But in either case these allowances are specifically for a Bodhisattva. Another prohibition in the text, immediately preceding the seven laxities just discussed, makes clear what that implies, for one is expressly forbidden from refraining from the conventionally reprehensible (*pratikṣepaṇasāvadya*) referred to above, when to do so conflicts with the needs of another.

The conventionally reprehensible are listed (BoBhū 165.2–9; KEOWN 1992:143,148). They bring out the contrast between the circumstances necessary for a quiet life for oneself and those which facilitate exertion on behalf of others. One could call them the rules of leisure: to need little (*alpārthatā*), be free from responsibilities (*alpakṛtyatā*), and to live free of cares (*alpotsukavihāratā*). The passage gives as a practical ramification of rejecting the three rules of leisure that one must collect hundreds and thousands of robes and other goods for redistribution to those in need (BoBhū 165.9–22).

By committing oneself to the possibility of carrying out such acts of practical charity, let alone one of the seven conventionally immoral acts permitted to a Bodhisattva, one is renouncing the freedoms one could have as a renunciate monk to concentrate on personal development, in order to act for the greater good. Those freedoms are not defined as such, but rather as rules, which

are designed to ensure efficiency of meditative practice. They are therefore necessary for one's personal development and their contravention is termed conventionally reprehensible (*pratikṣepa-ṇasāvadya*). As a Bodhisattva one is no longer free, but rather compelled to perform for others, hence the prohibition on the quiet life, and the somewhat trickier problem of explaining the legitimacy of what has turned out to be a strong antinomianism, if not yet antinomianism as a norm.

Ethical Problems

KEOWN turns to this issue of real rule-breaking with the fourth of the *Mahāyānasamgraha* sections given above, namely skilful means, the concept with which we entered our discussion of the relationship between Mahāyāna and Śrāvakayāna ethics. He points out that the doctrine of *upāyakauśalya*

makes the distinction between 'serious' and 'minor' offences redundant, (1992:150)

but adds the qualification that one has to have developed the skill in means before applying it, in order to restrict the authorisation sufficiently so that it no longer presents any legal difficulty. He distinguishes two attitudes, permissive and hard line (1992:152), before concluding that there are two corresponding kinds of skilful means, the first referring to normative ethics, the second to that of Bodhisattvas of the seventh stage (*upāyakauśalyabhūmi*) and beyond (1992:157). Yet in contrast to his own typology which classifies it as a permissive attitude, KEOWN sees in the antinomianism of a Bodhisattva, a

symbolic as opposed to normative statement of the importance attached by the Mahāyāna to concern for others. (1992:159)

Does he mean that the permissive attitude is only symbolically so?

For a statement to be symbolic is one thing; it is another to call an act symbolic. It may be symbolic to say that a Bodhisattva is

permitted to murder if thereby preventing his victim from committing the same crime, disqualifying himself from redemption. But is it symbolic if he actually kills Hitler when he meets him in a dark alley in Vienna in the 1920's? It would be an interesting question to put to a Bodhisattva, whether he would kill the man who will become a monster. That question can be posed three different ways, at least. Instead of *would* you, one can ask *could* you, and also *should* you.

The first phrasing may represent the symbolic intention. A Bodhisattva is the kind of chap who cares about Hitler's personal development over countless rebirths, has the wisdom to foresee what is to come, and *would* do the deed. The possibility of murder would symbolise the idea and qualities of a Bodhisattva. The second may be more what KEOWN has in mind as symbolic, that a Bodhisattva *could* with impunity murder a man under such circumstances, but it says little about either his probable course of action or dictated duty. This last, the *should* formulation, would be the strongest form of antinomianism and the most logical conclusion to draw from Mahāyāna ideology. Strong antinomianism is antinomianism as a norm, when it is the rule to break the otherwise accepted rule: when it is good to be bad.

Would, could, should is a progression seen from the points of view of first personal choice, then legal licence— a negative since it is leeway— and finally enforceable regulation— a positive since it demands. KEOWN argues that what has generated his second type of *upāya*, the extreme form, and further, what makes it suspicious, is:

the attempt to argue to an ethical conclusion from metaphysical premises, or from a fact to a value. (1992:161)

This analysis does not engage with our should phrasing in its strongest form, but is concerned that the move from could to should is strictly inappropriate. Could is no longer a matter of legal licence based on an overriding principle of compassion. It is

instead like the byproduct of a fact which is the highly questionable ontological status of conventional reality, rules and discipline included.

This fact is the expression and application of both Madhyamika and Yogācāra ways of analysing the world out there. Everything is either quite empty of its own existence full stop, or is nothing more than a superimposition on emptiness by the deluded mind. It remains to be demonstrated that these two are in this respect really different positions, or even very different from what may have been the pragmatic conclusion of the historical Buddha, that any difficulties we feel in our relations with the world depend on our attitude, i.e. on the world which we fictionalise in our hearts and minds. But ontology is one of the foundations of Tantric Buddhist Apologetics, as we shall see throughout this dissertation.

Ontology and Ethics

Ulrich PAGEL has concisely outlined the historical stages in the process apparent in Mahāyāna texts whereby developments in 'cognitive realisation' (1995:164) were eventually amalgamated into the scheme of religious prescription. He concentrates on this cognitive factor, while we have been examining how morality in the Mahāyāna was already being fundamentally redirected by the new ideal of a universal mission. The difference between these two perspectives coincides with that between our should (and would) and could formulations above. The affective (as opposed to cognitive) motivation to save all beings means that one should and thus would be prepared to do so at any cost. On the other hand, it is the new way of seeing the world out there, the new cognitive (as opposed to affective) relationship with reality, which means that one could do all kinds of otherwise dastardly deeds.

To summarise PAGEL's summary (1995:164–173): in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* and *Ugraparipṛcchā* the Śrāvakayā-

na framework of precepts is retained. The *Ratnacūḍaparipṛcchā*, where all practice is founded on the generation of the Bodhisattva's thought of enlightenment, also perpetuates the idea of the precepts as guiding principles on the path. In that text the world and immoral actions are still as real as the Dharma. Beginning with the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśa* one finds the integration of ethics into intellectual analysis, so that good behaviour is good if performed with a correct understanding of the way things are, rather than *per se*. The *Kāśyapaparivarta* is the first text to make a clear commitment to the ideology of Mahāyāna ontology. Thus, if a course of action is decided upon according to mistaken and now heterodox views of objectivity (*upalambhadṛṣṭi*: the wrong view that an object exists; translated by PAGEL (1995:166) as objectifiability), then it cannot be morally pure or right, since it is not intellectually pure or right (KāPa pp.193–4, §135). PAGEL adds that the *Kāśyapaparivarta* also makes acquisition of the factors of virtue (*kuśaladharma*) part of morality, as opposed to the traditionally ethical precept-like *kuśalakarmapatha* referred to above. In the Pāli Canon these factors of virtue which aid the attainment of enlightenment are preeminently correct attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) and conscientiousness (*appamāda*) (PAGEL 1995:169). In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, in particular, they have become integral to the ethical progress of a Bodhisattva (1995:167).

By the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* the interdependence of discipline and rest of reality is absolute:

It is with a fault as it is with the mind, and it is with all the factors of existence as it is with a fault; they are not separated from thusness... They are just like an illusion, a cloud or a flash of lightning... Those who understand it in this way are the holders of the discipline (*vinaya*); those who are disciplined in this way are well-disciplined. (PAGEL's translation (1995:167) of ViKīNi Peking vol. 34, p.80.3; he adds: cf. also KāPa p.144, §98).

In a footnote, PAGEL cites a later passage in the same *sūtra* which

clarifies what that implies:

Virtue and non-virtue are two. [A Bodhisattva] who does not seek after either virtue or non-virtue, and does not discern the sign and signless as two, penetrates non-duality... (PAGEL's translation of ViKīNi *ibid.* p.92.5).

Within Mahāyāna philosophy it can be considered a blatant error to perceive a distinction between subject and object. This is applied throughout all possible dualities so that finally one must see that black is white, and bad good. It is a mistake to differentiate between any pair. As the joke paraphrasing the Mādhyamika master Nāgārjuna goes:

I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that *saṃsāra* is *nirvāṇa*. The bad news is that *nirvāṇa* is *saṃsāra*. (after MūMaKā 25.19)

Such relativism in Mahāyāna ethics and philosophy can leave one lost for words in aporia, but some distinction between pairs is allowed. After all, Nāgārjuna introduces his account of the two truths with a verse insisting that the teaching of reality of the Buddhas did take into account both the ultimate and the conventional levels (*dve satye samupāśritya buddhānām dharmadeśanā, lokasamvṛtisatyam ca satyam ca paramārthataḥ*. MūMaKā 24.8). Suffering does exist, if only at the conventional level, and so does its cessation, as the third Noble Truth testifies.

Our next question is how the cessation of suffering has been understood, or whether and when the goal is positively identified with happiness. This issue is central to Tantric Buddhism, but not uncontroversially so. It is an important question for us in relation to some of the means then taught to reach such a goal, methods which themselves contradict what we have identified as core morality, and are at the heart of our investigation of Tantric Buddhist apologetics.

Mahāyāna Buddhism, as all Buddhism, is founded on the premiss that there is suffering, everywhere, a truth which needs to be realised. Once one can cut through the illusionary web of hopeful but mistaken attachment and enjoyment, one understands the inherent dissatisfaction in every such relationship, whether with people, animals or objects. Knowing, at last, the problem, one can strive to eradicate it by reversing the situation.

In terms of the Mahāyāna this problem solving may indeed be simultaneous with the cognitive and/or experiential identification of the problem. If you can only get a good clear look at the demon *duḥkha* it will disappear with a puff of smoke, extinguished (*nirvṛta*). But this brief mention will have to suffice as a whisper of the bigger argument about whether enlightenment can be instantaneous or only a long drawn-out affair. That was the topic of the debate between gradualism and subitism famously held in public at Samye in Tibet at the very end of the eighth century (cf. DEMIÉVILLE 1952 and Seyfort RUEGG 1989). The issues at stake there will turn out to be also pertinent to our study of Tantric Buddhism.

Suffering and its Opposite in Early Buddhism

In Buddhism *duḥkha* can be said to be personified in Māra, Death incarnate (cf. Latin *mors* etc.), the sinful one (*pāpīyāms* BHSD s.v., Pāli *pāpimā*), infamous for his struggle to tempt, divert and corrupt the Buddha just before enlightenment. Māra is regularly defined as four-fold: the māra which is the defilements, passion, hatred and delusion (*kleśamāra*), the māra which is the five constituents of everyone's so-called person, the sufferer or patient (*skandhamāra*), the māra which is death (*mṛtyumāra*) and the Māra who is a divine being (*devaputramāra*), i.e. the personification of the rest. Thus the Buddhist devil turns out to be more than just a diametrical opponent or accuser (cf. Gk. *dia-*

bolos) of our hero, the Buddha, but in addition represents three of the trials of life: the defilements which must be eradicated; the constituents of personality, which must against all egofying (*ahaṃkāra*) instinct be seen for what they are; and of course, plain old death.

All three features symbolised by Māra must be conquered if *duḥkha* is to be overcome. Death itself cannot be avoided. There is no evidence of an alchemical quest for immortality in Buddhism, at least not in the early tradition. Nor is there anything like the reported statement of Socrates that a philosopher's life is a preparation for death. But there is the possibility of escape from the endless round of rebirth, so that at last one will only have to die this one more time, the last time. And on the level of the individual life, the understanding of no-self will entail no-death-of-self, just as accepting impermanence will include the acceptance of death.

In the Buddha's first sermon, when he taught the first of the Noble Truths, the conclusion of the definition of *duḥkha* is that it is the five bundles (*skhandha*), the basis of clinging to existence (*saṃkhittena pañc'upādānakkhandhā pi dukkhā* Vin I.10=S V.421). It is completely human to suffer; suffering is not something like evil to which some unlucky ones are tempted and from which lucky ones are saved; it is native to the human condition.

The term *kleśa*, on the other hand, is rare in the Piṭakas of the Canon, according to RHYS DAVIDS (PTSD s.v.), while it becomes practically omnipresent in Tantric literature and that of the Mahāyāna. It is found especially in the form *kleśāvaraṇa*, the obstacles or obscurations which are the (emotional) defilements, in contrast to the *jñeyāvaraṇa*, mental obscurations or obstructions. But Pāli *kilesa* on its own is interchangeable with the origin (*samudaya*) of *dukkha* (Nett 191; PTSD s.v.). Even outside of a Buddhist context the word refers to torment, distress and so on. Affliction

may be a better translation than defilement; they are also known as poisons. Thus the afflictions too are causes of suffering, just as the constituents of the person are equated with it.

The second Noble Truth, the origin of suffering (*dukkhasamudaya*), is explained as thirst (*taṇhā*, Sanskrit *trṣṇā*). The Indian metaphor for desire emphasises ‘thirst’ in a hot climate rather than the European more usual ‘hunger’ for warming food in the cold and damp. This thirst which generates suffering is three-fold, namely: thirst for the pleasures of the senses (*kāmatāṇhā*), for continued existence (*bhavataṇhā*), and for release from continued existence (*vibhavataṇhā*) (Vin I.10=S V.421). The third Noble Truth, the cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodha*), is the total cessation of these cravings. The fourth Noble Truth is the way which leads to the end of suffering (*dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā*), namely the Noble Eightfold Path.

The very first words of the Buddha in the account of what happened after his enlightenment (Vin I.10=S V.421), even before he outlines his Noble Truths, describe the Eightfold Path above all as a middle way (*majjhimā paṭipadā*). He says that one who has gone forth (*pabbajita*), from the life of a householder, should not cultivate either of two extremes (*dve antā*). This means that, on the one hand, he should not be addicted to pleasures of the senses (*kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo*), a low and vulgar practice; on the other hand, he should not be addicted to self-mortification (*atthakilamathānuyogo*), which is a practice of suffering. Both extremes are equally ignoble and unprofitable (*anariyo anattasaṃhito*). The Tathāgata did not get anywhere by either of them, and was awakened (*abhisambuddha*) to the Middle Way which leads to realisation, enlightenment (*sambodhi*) and *nibbāna*.

The nature of suffering is important for our present question about whether the goal, the escape from suffering, should be described as the opposite of suffering— potentially an equally un-

healthy extreme— or only as its absence. We need to answer this before addressing the yet more crucial related question about the nature of the path to reach the goal, all of which is pertinent to this dissertation on Tantric Buddhism. For that later tradition is interpreted and attacked as being a religion of pleasure of the senses, and has as its self-proclaimed goal or fruit Great Bliss (*Mahāsukha*). On the other hand, in European eyes [Theravāda] Buddhism has been interpreted and even attacked as being a world-denying religion, the opposite of life-affirming. Its *nirvāṇa* has been explained as an unappealing annihilation, a million miles from the baroque culture of Tantra which many have seen as totally dissolute. Earlier Buddhism has been painted so white as to be bland and uninteresting, slightly miserable even.

So what did the Buddha say about his enlightenment? One of his most usual epithets is *Sugata*, Well-gone. It may be etymologically a close pair to another popular epithet, *Tathāgata*, Thus-gone or Thus-come. In Sanskrit *-gata* at the end of a compound does not literally mean ‘gone’, but ‘having gone to’ or ‘arrived at’, i.e. ‘at/in’ or ‘being’. Richard GOMBRICH has discussed the term *Tathāgata* in the light of this grammatical analysis and concluded that what the Buddha intended thereby is: ‘the one who *is* like that’ (1997:16, my ital.), i.e., according to GOMBRICH, in a state beyond words. *Sugata* would then mean ‘the one who is well’; well rather than good or happy, because *su-* is just the positive corollary of *dus-*, a well-attested Indo-European pair for the basic qualification of something as positive or negative.

The Sanskrit behind our ‘happiness’, ‘pleasure’ or ‘bliss’ is *sukha*. It is the opposite of *duḥkha*, but perhaps etymologically prior to this latter, which may have been formed later, by analogy. The earliest attested occurrence of *sukha* is in the *Ṛgveda* (TURNER 1962, s.v.). There it is the attribute of a chariot or rather its wheel: *kha* (lit. space) is the aperture in which the axle rests and turns;

the fit can be right (*su-kha*) and the chariot's progress unimpeded (or, hypothetically but unattested, uncomfortable (*duḥ-kha*) and the ride rough). It is however unsure whether the earlier word is etymologically related to the later, since testimony for it between the time of the Vedic verses and our Middle Indo-Aryan, which could show the metaphorical generalisation of the term, has not been collected.

In Tantric Buddhism *sukha* as a goal is upgraded to *Mahā-sukha*, which has been consistently translated as Great Bliss. A practitioner described to me the difference between bliss, which is the oceanic feeling at the heart of every being, and happiness which, like suffering, is nothing but surface waves, crests and troughs almost unrelated to the deep ocean. We will see how far that corresponds to the description in Tantric Buddhist texts. The oceanic feeling fits with the posited etymological analysis, which points to a stable state, a being at ease, without a drop of excitement. But does that make *sukha* Bliss? Is there a qualitative difference between the goal and whatever anticipates it, as one would *a priori* expect?

We will continue with our analysis of Pāli sources, commonly philologically held to be close to the Buddha's own words, referring mainly to the *suttas* of the Majjhima Nikāya, a somewhat arbitrary choice for the sake of convenience, but a representative collection. How did he talk about *sukha*? Is it something he experienced, or advocated?

Happiness on the Path

That is what Saccaka, Nigaṇṭhaputta (i.e. born of Jain parents), asked the Buddha:

Surely Master Gotama has had a feeling of happiness (*sukhā vedanā*) such that it could overpower the mind (*cittaṃ pariyā-dāya*) and persist (*tiṭṭheyya*)? (and similarly for a painful feeling

(*dukkhā vedanā*); *Mahāsaccaka Sutta* 36, MN i.240)

Aggivessana's question leads on from his previous assumption that the Buddha was cultivated in mind (*bhāvitacitto*), but not in body. This he assumes because he equates the cultivation of the body (*kāyabhāvanā*) with self-mortification or extreme asceticism such as practised by the Ājīvika gurus including the Buddha's contemporary Makkhali Gosāla, and he does not see the Buddha practicing such asceticism. The Buddha had explained that cultivation of the mind is what enables someone to experience the feeling of happiness but not be aroused thereby to lust for more, and so his mind is not overpowered by happiness which persists (*cittam na pariyādāya tiṭṭhati*; MN i.239). Cultivation of the body means that when the happiness inevitably ceases, resulting in a painful feeling, one does not grieve and allow the pain to overpower and persist in the mind. Aggivessana accepts that the Buddha has achieved this two-fold cultivation, but nevertheless, cheekily (*āsajja upanīya*; MN i.240) insists on our above-quoted question.

The Buddha's response is: 'Of course!' (lit. Why not? *kiṃ hi no siyā*), and he recollects his directly pre-enlightenment past, namely: his own self-mortification followed by the memory of an earlier happiness as a prince. He had been staying with two other teachers, but had become illusioned each time, and finally found himself in a lovely spot (*rāmaṇīyo bhūmibhāgo* etc.; repeated from MN i.167), which he thought suitable for his exertion (*alam idam padhānāya*; *ibid.*).

There straight away three similes (*upamā*) occurred to him. These are not found in the curtailed parallel account in the *Ariya-pariyesanā Sutta*, which elides the report of his ascetic practice (MN 26/i.167). They relate the story of a stick (*kaṭṭha*) which someone wants to rub with another to create fire. If the wood is sodden with sap (*sasneha*) and submerged in water, one will

not succeed. Just so renunciates (*samanā*) and brahmins who retain affection for the pleasures of the senses (*kāmasneha*) internally (*ajjhataṃ*), and are not physically (*kāyena*) withdrawn (*vūpakatṭhā*), cannot (*abhabbā*) attain knowledge, vision and the highest enlightenment (*ñāṇāya dassanāya uttarāya sambodhāya*), whether they have suffered pain (*dukkhā vedanā*), or not (MN i.240–241). The pain referred to must be that of the practice of self-mortification, in which case the Buddha is anachronistically anticipating his later conclusion that such suffering is irrelevant. For, as the Buddha concludes, it is only when one has a sap-less stick on dry land that one can make fire, just as those who are physically withdrawn and internally free of desire have the above success. The intermediate simile had made the point that it is no good having a stick on dry land if it is still sappy, thus emphasising the necessary internal dryness of a practitioner and that being spatially withdrawn is not sufficient. The allegory is especially apposite because the word for sap is the same as that for affection (*sneha*), derived from the root ‘to stick/be sticky’.

According to this account of the Buddha’s progress towards enlightenment, it is after thinking of these original (*assutapubbā*) similes (MN i.240–242) that the Buddha begins his assault on the peaks of asceticism (MN i.242–246). First of all he clenches teeth and jaw and ‘presses on mind with mind’ (*cetasā cittaṃ abhiniggaṇheyyam*; MN i.242). This does give him energy and mindfulness (*āradham... viriyam... upaṭṭhitā sati*), but leaves his body disturbed through his exhaustion. Nevertheless, whatever pain he felt (*dukkhā vedanā*) did not overpower the mind (*cittaṃ pariyādāya*) and persist (*tittṭheyya*). Thus he answers in the negative to Saccaka’s question, proving that he was indeed already then cultivated in both body and mind, but leaving unexplained his initial response of ‘Of course!’. The Buddha tells how he kept on upping the ante of his agony, holding his breath until he felt

his brain was exploding before going on to all but starve himself completely.

The gods had threatened to force-feed him surreptitiously if he fasted totally, after some of them had remarked that his dreadful physical condition did not mean he was dead, or dying, but an *arahant*:

for that is exactly the condition of an *arahant*.
(*vihāro tv eva so arahato evarūpo hoti*; MN i.245)

The implication is that some gods at least consider it part and parcel of spiritual success that one will have become a physical wreck. The emaciated Buddha went on to become a starved sight so unsavoury that it is depicted but very rarely in art from the sub-continent (almost exclusively in Gandhāra; cf. BROWN 1997). In the end he could claim to have exceeded the pain of any other seeker past, present or future, but had also to admit that it had been to no purpose, and that there must be an alternative way to enlightenment (*siyā nu kho añño maggo bodhāya*; MN i.246).

Then only, after the failure of his search consisting in pain, does the Buddha remember a childhood experience. One day he had been sitting in the shade of a rose-apple tree (*jambucchāyāya*), removed from pleasures of the senses and unwholesome factors (*vivicc' eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*), when he entered the first *jhāna*, which includes discriminative thought, is born of seclusion, and is joy and happiness (*pītisukham*; *ibid.*). Already as a young man, he had wondered if that might be the way to enlightenment, and now, in the narrative, he realised that this was indeed the way to go. The Buddha still has to question himself as to why he fears (*bhāyāmi*) such happiness (*sukha*) when it is quite different from pleasures of the senses and unwholesome factors (MN i.246–247), before he realises that he is now no longer afraid. Finally he thinks that it would be difficult (*na... sukaram*) to attain such happiness with his emaciated body, and

so resolves to take solid food. His act of eating repulses his five followers who abandon him in disgust at his giving up of exertion (*padhānavibbhanto*).

After his meal, the Buddha began his ascent through pleasure, which would end in enlightenment. It began in the basic comfort which is a prerequisite for the first happiness of the first *jhāna*. He rose through each of the four *jhānas* and then the three knowledges (*tevijjā*): of his previous rebirths (*pubbenivāsa*), the transmigration (*cutūpapāta*) of others according to their acts (*yathākammūpage*), and finally, the knowledge of the Four Truths and of liberation (*cittaṃ... vimuttam iti ñāṇam*; MN i.249). The description of each of these stages ends with the assertion we have seen before that whatever feeling of happiness he felt (*sukhā vedanā*) did not overpower the mind (*cittaṃ pariyādāya*) and persist (*tiṭṭheyya*), a statement exactly parallel to the repeated qualification of the pain he felt in his self-mortification.

But that statement seems to be over-mechanically tagged on to the passages. It makes sense in connection with the first *jhāna* which is known to bring happiness, and likewise the second, which is also said to consist of happiness and joy (*pītisukham*). The third too is what is referred to when Noble Ones (*ariyā*) point out: He who has equanimity and mindfulness lives happy (*upekkhako satimā sukhavihāri*). Joy has been transcended (*pītiyā ca virāgā*), but one still feels physical happiness (*sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedesiṃ*). So the first three *jhānas* involve happiness about which it makes sense to claim that it is not overpowering.

Yet the fourth *jhāna* is specifically defined, in this account as everywhere else, as the purification of mindfulness in equanimity (*upekkhāsatipārisuddhim*), beyond pleasure and pain and happiness and grief (*sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbe va somanassadomanassānam atthagamā adukkham asukham*; MN i.247). Why should the Buddha nevertheless refer to feeling hap-

piness then also?

A parallel text is the *Sallekha Sutta* (MN 8), the Sutta of Austerities. *Sallekha* comes from the root *likh*, to inscribe or scratch, and presumably hence, with the prefix, to practise asceticism. The Jains have the related term *sallekhanā*, but otherwise it is not found in orthodox Sanskrit. In the *sutta* a monk who enters into the four *jhānas* might think he is living austerely (*sallekkena viharāmi*; MN i.40). But in fact, in the *vinaya* of the Noble One, these *jhānas* are called ‘dwelling in happiness in this world’ (*ditṭhadhammasukhavihārā ete ariyassa vinaye vuccanti*; MN i.40–41). The set of four higher attainments are similarly to be known as ‘dwelling in peace’ (*santā ete vihārā*). *Vinaya* probably does not here refer to the Book of Discipline, and the statement has not been found there. It is probably ‘discipline’ in general, what the brahmins would call a *yoga*.

When the Sutta goes on to list what does count as austerity, included are the practice of the ten courses of good action referred to above, and the eight-fold path, and abandoning the hindrances, imperfections of the mind and bad qualities (*sallekho karaṇīyo*; MN i.42–43; cf. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli’s transl. and fn. 107). It seems as though this Sutta is making the point that the *jhānas*, in contrast to ‘austerity’ redefined as ethical discipline, are almost frivolous, not conducive to spiritual perfection, because they produce a delight which is mundane.

This defining of elements of the Buddha’s own experience as of more or less value on the path to enlightenment serves to remind us of the endless tension between advocating a hard effective discipline, along the lines of ‘if it hurts it is good for you’, and an enjoyably productive practice. A large part of the task of this dissertation is to assess when in Buddhism and especially its Tantric variety it is bad to be happy, and then when, in those terms, it could actually be good to be bad, meaning when it is good to be

happy. In this introduction we are assessing what was taught by, or near in time to, the historical Buddha, many centuries before the earliest texts of Tantric Buddhism. In combining in one study the two traditions far apart in time, I am assuming a continuity, that there is a genetic relationship between them, and that the comparison will help to bring out whether or where the latter is innovative.

Happiness as the Goal

If we turn now from stages along the path to descriptions of the goal itself, we find such in the *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta* (MN 12), the ‘Great Sutta of the Lion’s Roar’. A certain Sunakkhatta, who has himself defected from the Sangha, publicly impugns the Buddha’s attainments, charging him with mere rational understanding, and no special powers. He derides the destruction of suffering (*dukkhakkhayāya*; MN i.68) as the sum total achievement, failing to recognise the extraordinary feats attendant thereon. Of those, one is the Buddha’s ability to comprehend (*pajānāmi*; MN i.73) the five possible spheres of rebirth (*pañca... gatiyo*; *ibid.*) and their negation, *nibbāna*. Hell (*ekantadukkhā... kaṭukā vedanā*; MN i.74), the animal realm (*dukkhā... kaṭukā vedanā*; MN i.75) and that of the hungry ghosts (simply *dukkhabahulā vedanā*; *ibid.*) are accompanied by very painful feelings, although that of the hungry ghosts is much the least extreme.

A human rebirth is accompanied by very pleasant feeling (*sukhabahulā vedanā*; *ibid.*), and the heavenly destination is extremely pleasant (*ekantasukhā vedanā*; MN i.76). But when the Buddha comes to describe the experience of *nibbāna* he again says that it consists of an extremely pleasant feeling (*ekantasukhā vedanā*; *ibid.*). He describes this by analogy to what a hot, tired and thirsty man feels if he can find a lovely cool pool and plunge into it, drink, and then relax in the adjacent wood (*ibid.*). This is a

very physical simile, rather emphasising pleasure than happiness, although perhaps it is telling that the precise moment of analogy is itself after the physical experience of pleasure, when one is at peace, happy, and one's spirit is fully uplifted.

The description of the delicious feeling of enlightenment is followed straightaway by a lengthy and stomach-turning account of the Buddha's pre-enlightenment austerities. They are initially grouped together under the name of the pure life (*brahmacariyam*; MN i.77, the same word as used for celibacy), and subdivided here into four extremes, namely: extreme asceticism (*paramatappasī*), extreme scumminess (*paramalūkho*), extreme fastidiousness (*paramajegucchi*), and extreme solitude (*paramapavivitto*). The Buddha criticises none of these four lifestyles when he recounts their features. But thereafter come further descriptions of his fasting and these are judged. They are prefaced with the statement that some think purity comes with food (*āhārena suddhi*; MN i.8of.), that is to say, by its reduction to one of a selection of unappetising ingredients. He tries each of these dietary cures but concludes that, though close each time to wasting away, he made no spiritual progress (MN i.81). His aim in narrating all those weird and wonderful practices is presumably to show both that he was man enough to do them, and that his experience qualifies him to judge them useless.

But does the Buddha always insist that self-inflicted pain is useless, given that it seems quite superfluous to the mountain of suffering in life as it is? In the *Devadaha Sutta* (MN 101) he addresses mistaken conceptions of the Jain Nigaṇṭhas, beginning with the notion that *kamma* is at the root of all feelings, good or bad, and that asceticism can literally destroy it, freeing one from suffering (MN ii.214). The entire refutation is based on inconsistencies revealed in the Jains' dependence on self-mortification, ending with ten legitimate deductions from their claims (*sahad-*

hammikā vādānuvādā; MN ii.222–223) which demonstrate that their effort and striving is in vain (*aphalo upakkamo... aphalaṃ padhānam*; MN ii.223). Next it is up to the Buddha to explain what type of effort and striving is not in vain. Those words are not in themselves semantically bound up with harsh physical practices or pain and suffering, and the Buddha tells that they are fruitful if in tune with the Middle Way. He gives the example of a monk freeing himself from the suffering he feels when he sees a woman he desires flirting with another, by abandoning that desire (MN i.223–224).

Then we get the example of a further monk, who is aware that living as he pleases (*yathāsukham kho me viharato*; MN ii.225) produces unwholesome factors (*akusalā dhammā*; *ibid.*), and reduces wholesome ones. On the other hand, when he exerts himself with pain (*dukkhāya pana me attānaṃ padahato*) the reverse is true, and so progress is made. With this thought he does ‘exert himself with pain’, and sees the predicted results. Later (*aparena samayena*) he does not so exert himself; why (*kissa hetu*)? Because his purpose has been fulfilled (*attho abhinipphanno*). The illustrating simile is of a maker of metal arrows (*usukāro*) who only heats them to make them straight and workable (*ujum... kammanīyam*), and then does not need to do so again. The Buddha appears to be granting that asceticism does have a role. After all, he did practise extreme deprivation himself, but one limited, here, to the generation of wholesome *dhammas*. It is unfortunate that we have no details about this painful exertion, but, in general, the passage does contrast with the Buddha’s well-known refusal to make the thirteen harsh ascetic practices (*dhutagaṇa*, cf. below p.296) compulsory, and his many warnings against certain negative aspects associated with them.

However, we are at the moment not so concerned with painful practices as we are with pleasure as a goal and aspect of the path.

The Sutta ends with a list of ten legitimate grounds for praising the Tathāgata (*sahadhammikā pāsamsaṭṭhānā*; MN i.227). The first five all boil down to the fact that he ‘now feels such feelings of happiness free of influxes’ (*etarahi eva rūpā anāsavā sukhā vedanā vedeti*; *ibid.*). Granted, the Buddha does enjoy his state, as would all enlightened beings, but does that mean, as will be claimed in Tantric Buddhism, that the enjoyment of pleasures, especially of the senses, can be the way to reach such happy enlightenment?

One would *prima facie*, given what we know of Buddhism as a renunciate religion, expect the Buddha’s answer to be no. The religious path should not be an easy one. Indeed, the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, the very first of the Dīgha Nikāya, includes this refutation in its list of sixty-two false non-Buddhist doctrines (DN i.12ff). The fifty-eighth wrong view is that:

In so far as this self, being furnished and endowed (*samappito samaṅgibhūto*) with the fivefold sense-pleasures (*kāmaguṇehi*), indulges in them (*paricāreti*), then that is when the self realises the highest *nibbāna* here and now (*paramadiṭṭhadhammanibbānam*; DN i.36; transl. WALSHE 1987:85).

Moreover, the next four mistaken beliefs are that each of the *jhānas* in turn is the moment

when the self realises the highest *nibbāna* here and now (DN i.36–38; transl. *ibid.*).

Together these make up the five ways of proclaiming the possibility of enlightenment in the present and in the world, which is judged false. The inadmissible adjective is *diṭṭhadhamma*, which refers to the world of sensation, as opposed to that of ‘the state after death, the beyond’ (PTSD s.v.). The idea must be that enlightenment is itself transcendent, and that *diṭṭhadhamma* is a term with too much of a secular and indeed sensual connotation, as evinced in the first of the five wrong views. The remaining

four are testament to the position that the *jhānas* are also finally secular, including the fourth, and enlightenment is only reached thereafter and beyond.

In the *Araṇavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 139) the Buddha says that one must know what pleasure is (*sukhavinicchayaṃ jaññā*; MN iii.233), and then engage with it internally (*ajjhataṃ sukham anuyuñjeyyāti*; *ibid.*). A two-fold division of pleasure is made, between on the one hand: the pleasure born from the five sense organs (*kāmaguṇā*; *ibid.*), which is called sensual pleasure (*kāmaguṇa*) and is not to be cultivated and actually to be feared (*na āsevitabbam... bhāyitabbam*); and on the other: the pleasure generated through withdrawal from the sense organs (*vivicc' eva kāmehi*) and then through the four *jhānas*, which is the pleasure of renunciation and of enlightenment (*nekkhammasukham... sambodhisukham*), to be cultivated and not feared. These formulaic paragraphs are repeated in many places in the Canon, in different contexts.

Two telling contexts are the Big and Small Suttas on the Mass of Suffering (*Mahā-/Cūḷa-dukkhakkhanda Suttas*; MN 13,14), prominently placed near the beginning of the Majjhima Nikāya. In the former the discussion centres on three topics: the pleasures of the senses (*kāma*; MN i.85), forms or objects (*rūpa*), and feelings (*vedanā*); and their respective enjoyment (*assādo*), wretchedness (*ādīnava*) or suffering caused thereby, and escape (*nissaraṇam*). The inescapable danger of sensual experience is illustrated by the vagaries of anyone's working life, facing the weather, failure, and the fear of losing one's profits, then also quarrels, fights and wars, and so on (MN I.85–87). In this Sutta the 'pleasures of the senses' (*kāma*) are understood as worldly life in general. Only renunciates and brahmins can escape, by the rejection of desire and passion (*chandarāgappahāṇam*; MN i.87; and we shall return to the question of desire below p.54ff.).

A similar lesson is learnt in the Small Sutta on Suffering, where a layman, Mahānāma (Big Name), complains that though he has understood the imperative to abandon passion, hatred and delusion, nevertheless they sometimes return to haunt him (MN i.91). The Buddha points out that there is one factor he has not yet abandoned internally (*dhammo ajjhattam appahīno*; *ibid*), or else he would no longer be living as a house-holder (*tasmā tvam agāram ajjhāvasasi*). The implication is obvious, that it is the life as a man of the world which scuppers one's progress, because of the inherent corruption of the life of sense experience (*kāmā bahudukkhā*).

This renunciate perspective is immediately counter-balanced with the refutation of Jain dogma that happiness comes through suffering (*dukkhena kho sukham adhigantabbam*; MN i.93). The Jain Nigaṇṭhas back their assertion up with the challenge that otherwise the king would be happiest since he has to suffer least (MN i.94). The Buddha counters their objection with his incontestable superiority in so far as he is able to stay, silent and motionless, for seven days and nights experiencing the highest happiness (*rattindivāni ekantasukhapaṭisaṃvedī*). He is having a better time (*sukhavihāritaro*; MN i.95) than the king, who may live a life of luxury but is not at peace or capable of special feats of trance.

The brief *Bahuvedanīya Sutta* (MN 59) is dedicated to the many kinds of feeling, in order to stack them in a hierarchy. The result is what we would expect: sensual pleasures, then each of the four *jhānas* and then the four bases (*āyatana*; MN i.399–400) or formless meditations. Each of these pleasures is bigger and better than the preceding (*sukhaṃ abhikkantataraṇ ca paṇītataraṇ ca*). And finally the Buddha puts to himself the question followers of another religion might ask, namely:

The highest meditation, the cessation of consciousness of and sensation, is called pleasure, but what is that and how? (MN

i.400)

His response is that he does not say that only a feeling which is pleasurable is pleasure (*na... Bhagavā sukham yeva vedanam sandhāya sukhasmiṃ paññāpeti*), but any pleasure wherever it is perceived is pleasure (*api c'āvuso yattha yattha sukham upalabbhati yaḥiṃ yaḥiṃ tan taṃ Tathāgato sukhasmiṃ paññāpeti*). The sense must be that some pleasure is beyond feeling, such as that of the highest formless meditations, but is still pleasure. One must only be sure to understand the hierarchy.

Sensual Pleasure

So, enlightenment is bliss, but that bliss is something different from the sensual pleasures of the unenlightened world. The two should not be confused. The first is to be aimed for, the latter avoided, an absolute distinction the Buddha had to reiterate often for the sake of disciples who obdurately misunderstood his teaching.

In the *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta* (MN 12), 'The Big Sutta of the Lion's Roar', which we looked at above for its description of the Buddha's austerities (p.42f.), his four self-confidences (*vesā-rajja*) are listed. Three are that he can defend himself against baseless charges of: not being enlightened, not having eliminated the defilements, and not teaching a Dhamma which brings others to enlightenment. The third is that there is no ground (*nimittam*; MN i.72) for any to object that what he calls obstructions are in fact not obstructions when engaged with (*ye... te antarāyikā dhammā vuttā te paṭisevato nālam antarāyāya*; *ibid.*). These are the four things about which he can feel absolutely certain, at ease and fearless. This sounds a little defensive, and one might deduce that these are issues on which the Buddha was seriously attacked. They are perhaps not that easy to argue for rationally, since the first three listed here refer to psychological states, the highest of

which, enlightenment, is notoriously difficult to encapsulate in words. What about the obstacles?

We find the answer not in that *sutta*, but elsewhere, famously, for example, in the *Alagaddūpama Sutta*, the ‘Simile of the Snake’ (MN 22). This *sutta* begins with Ariṭṭha making that very same claim of harmlessness concerning the so-called obstructions (MN i.130), which is a heinous wrong view (*pāpakam diṭṭhigatam*). First monks, and then the Buddha himself, challenge him, asking:

Did not the Buddha many times teach that the pleasures of the senses are not gratifying, very painful and so on (*appassādā kāmā... bahudukkhā*; MN i.130–133)?

In tune with all that we have referred to so far in the Canon, and especially the detailed explanation of the *Mahādukkhakkhanda Sutta*, there is no hint that *kāma* is anything more than any and all of the pleasures, or sense-experiences, of life in the world, not restricted in any way to erotic pleasure. This is interesting, because although the two terms—*kāma* and *eros*—are etymologically synonymous, since both are love and indeed its deification, the God of Love, both equally equipped with bow and arrow, yet they are not uniformly co-referential. Buddhism does not differ from the rest of ancient Indian culture in this respect, that *kāma* means both love or desire as well as the objects of the faculties of the senses. In Sanskrit the distinction is made between a masculine noun for the subjective desire, and a neuter noun for the objective object. In our texts, the masculine plural *kāmā*, can be read as an abbreviation of the full *kāmaguṇā*, the five ‘strands’ of sensual enjoyment, i.e. ‘the pleasures which are to be enjoyed by means of the five senses’ (PTSD s.v.). These terms and the premise of Ariṭṭha’s dreadful error of judgement regarding their essentially obstructive nature are at the heart of at least one current of the Tantric system and its apologetics.

In the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* the error is especially inexcusable, since the Buddha has in many teachings taught the correct view,

and made it accessible through many similes, nine of which are there listed by name alone (MN i.130–133). One can expand them oneself, seeing that a lump of meat is analogous to the objects of desire because flies swarm to it, a grass torch because it burns up in an instant scorching one's hand, and so on. In conclusion: there is no possibility (*n'etaṃ thānaṃ vijjati*; MN i.133) of engaging in the objects of the senses, the objects of desire (*kāme*), without [subjective] desire (*aññatr'eva kāmehi*). The danger lies in one's passionate attachment to the objects. One of the similes is simply stated as a pit of glowing coals (*aṅgārakāsa*). This is unpacked in an illuminating way in the *Māgandiya Sutta* (MN 75).

There Māgandiya, a renunciate (*paribbājako*; MN i.502ff.), is contemptuous of the Buddha, calling him 'destroyer of embryos' (*bhūnahuno*; *ibid.*). The commentary explains this cryptic term ('difficult to explain'; PTSD s.v.) in terms of Māgandiya's wrong view that 'growth' should be accomplished in the six senses by experiencing

whatever sense objects one has never experienced before without clinging to those that are already familiar. (ÑĀṆAMOḶI 1995:1278, fn.740 ad loc).

ÑĀṆAMOḶI's note continues:

His view thus seems close to the contemporary attitude that intensity and variety of experience is the ultimate good and should be pursued without inhibitions or restrictions.

This comment will turn out to be pertinent to the question of how one should understand Tantric Buddhism. For now we should assess the extensive simile with which the Buddha responds to Māgandiya's accusation, having first ascertained that it was indeed made with reference to the sense-faculties and their enjoyment of their objects (MN i.503).

First of all the Buddha relates his personal realisation: living in the palace he enjoyed every sensual pleasure, until, at a later date

(*aparena samayena*; MN i.504), i.e. in the first *jhāna* under the rose-apple tree as recounted above (p.39), he discovered a joy (*rati*) which exceeds heavenly pleasure (*dibbaṃ sukhaṃ samadhiggayha*; MN i.504–505). Moving back down the hierarchy, as it were, he compares this attainment of a higher happiness—leaving the lower behind for ever without regret (*vigatapipāso*)—to that a wealthy man would realise if reborn in heaven to enjoy the divine sensual pleasures (*dibbehi pañcahi kāmagaṇehi*).

The simile of the leper goes beyond this pragmatic calculus of promoting one pleasure as more pleasurable than another, to graphically illustrate the fundamentally unhealthy nature of mundane sensual experience. In the first step of the analogy a wretched leper holds his body over fire to cauterise his open sores (MN i.506), as is customary; but once cured by a doctor he would have no further desire (*piheyya*) for his previous practice. For only when there is sickness is there need for medicine (*roge... sati bhesajjena karaṇīyaṃ hoti*). Similarly, if a leper is cured and living happy (*sukhī*; MN i.507), and then two strong men (*balavanto purisā*) were to drag him to a pit of fire, of course he would struggle. After all, the fire is painful to touch (*aggi dukkhasamphasso*). But the message is that this is not a new characteristic of the fire, for it was always so (*pubbe pi*).

Indeed, the leper was somewhat crazed in his suffering; his physical torture meant that his sense-faculties could not function (*upahatindriyo*) and he had the deluded perception (*viparītasāññam*) that there was pleasure in the fire, though it was in fact painful to touch (*dukkhasamphasse*). The same is true of living beings in relation to the objects of the senses, always painful to touch and on fire. Beings who still feel the affliction passion (*avītarāgā*) are deluded in their thirst and on fire with desire for those objects (*kāmaparilāhena paridayhamānā*), and have their own deluded notion that they are having a good time. Not only that, the third

stage of the simile describes how the suffering leper is caught in the vicious cycle of burning his body, which thus becomes more disgusting, and of course painful, and yet scratching open the sores (*vaṇamukhānaṃ kaṇḍūvanahetu*; MN i.508) does bring some initial relief (*kāci sātammattā*). This is the most salutary part of the parable: the more one indulges, the more one builds up craving. The king has never been seen who lived without craving (*vigatapipāso*), at peace, content with his many worldly pleasures. One cannot be too careful, for the way of the physical senses is a steep slope down to a deep pit of suffering.

The final simile of the Sutta is ostensibly designed to illustrate the need for good men (*sappurise*; MN i.512) as trustworthy companions on the path. But it is provoked by the renunciate Māgandiya's stubborn miscomprehension of a specific verse:

The greatest of all gains is health, *nibbāna* is the greatest bliss, the eightfold path is the best of paths for it leads safely to the Deathless. (*Ārogyaparamā lābhā, nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ, atthaṅgiko ca maggānaṃ khemaṃ amatagāminam*; MN i.508; transl. ÑĀṆAMOLI 1995:613).

Māgandiya recognises the first line of the verse, and explains it according to the understanding passed down in his tradition. He rubs his body (*sakān' eva... gattāni... anomajjati*; MN i.509) and says:

This is my health and *nibbāna*. For I am now healthy and happy.

The Buddha is thus pressed to show Māgandiya that his health and happiness are not real, which he does by means of the allegory of a man blind from birth (*jaccandho*) and his clothes (*vattham*). That man has heard that clean white cloth is beautiful, but has been conned by a seeing man into wearing a filthy rag, because that cheat said it was clean and white.

The parable is like that of the Emperor's New Clothes, with the difference that the Buddha's version employs a physical handicap

in analogy for the psychological weakness which is in contrast addressed as such in the naked Emperor's vain parading of himself, deluded by flattery into thinking he is beautifully dressed. The Buddha's use of blindness as a metaphor for ignorance highlights his diagnostic approach to well-being, that the obstacles are physical, intrinsic to human existence and real. One must take psychological handicaps seriously, which means recognising their origin in the external world and one's experience thereof. Thinking that one is well, healthy and happy, is prematurely to overlook the inexorable decline of bodily health and psychological disappointment in transient pleasures.

The Buddha wants to make Māgandiya see that the body is disease itself (*kāyo rogabhūto*; MN i.510), but the old non-Buddhist tradition has been blind (*aññatitthiyā paribbājakā andhā*; *ibid.*), and so he as a follower is unable to recognise with the noble eye (*ariyena cakkhunā*) what is health and what *nibbāna*. The narrative continues with a doctor who fails to cure the blindness and is disappointed, a failure such as the Buddha himself fears in the case of his patient, Māgandiya. Even if the blind man regains his sight, and sees the filthy rag for what it is, he would then burn with enmity (*paccatthikato pi daheyya*; MN i.511) against the one who deceived him and want him dead (*jīviyā voropetabbam*). Something like this bitter resentment is apparently what the Buddha desires Māgandiya to wake up and feel towards his mind which deceived him (*iminā cittena nikato vañcito*), so that he can at last see that clinging (*upādāna*) was the ultimate cause of the whole mountain of suffering (*evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo*; MN i.512). Finally, as mentioned above, the advice given is to associate with good men, for from them one will hear the good Dharma (*saddhammam*), and be inspired to practise it, and so in the end suffering will be arrested (*nirodho*).

We have briefly examined the issues of happiness and pleasure

in the Pāli Canon, in order to discover that yes, enlightenment is a happy state, but of a higher order than the happiness felt in the *jhānas*, which in turn transcends the treacherous pleasure of worldly life, the pleasure felt by the senses in contact with their objects in the world. Now we come to the final part of our investigation into early Buddhism.

Desire for Happiness

The question of desire is problematic in Buddhism, as in any religion (cf. the clear proposition by Wayne ALT that ‘There is no paradox of desire in Buddhism’ (1980), with the reply by A.L.HERMAN (1980)). We have already seen that the Buddha is opposed to engagement with the objects of the senses, the objects of desire (*kāma*), for that way disappointment and frustration lie. However, there remains the problem of motivation, the precondition for engagement in the task. Motivation can take many psychological forms: fear, again in many forms, trust in a teacher or ‘good men’, and desire, to name a few. The situations of fear and desire are parallel, as we see if we take a paragraph of Torkel BREKKE’s, from ‘The Role of Fear in Indian Religious Thought with Special Reference to Buddhism’, and replace each occurrence of the word ‘fear’ with our ‘desire’:

On the one hand, desire is the natural state of saṃsāric existence... Conversely, freedom from desire is an important aspect of complete religious realization. On the other hand, desire is a necessary state of mind in the striving to escape saṃsāric existence and achieve freedom. Desire should be cultivated as the basic motivating factor in the religious life. Thus, desire is both a negative thing, from which beings should try to escape through religious exertion, and a positive thing, without which the very same exertion is impossible. (BREKKE 1999:442, *mutatis mutandis*)

The problem with desire, as the Buddha taught, is that it is the cause of suffering, because it is based on ignorance. There might however be such a thing as right desire. But if it is to be right because based on knowledge, such as the understanding that the objects do not exist, then we are back to the conflation of fact and value which KEOWN highlighted with respect to Bodhisattva morality, as discussed above (p.28). What about desire for the happiness which is enlightenment? How is that issue addressed in the Pāli Canon?

The term for desire, in the sense of desire to act, a motivating desire, is *chanda* (Skt. *chandas*), an impulse. But that too more often than not has a negative reference (*akusala*) in the texts, as analogous to *rāga* or *kāma* (*kāmachanda*) with all that we have seen above that those terms imply, and, for example, as the erroneous desire one has for the body full of puss and excrement (*kāyachando kāyasneho kāyanvayatā*; Dīghanakha Sutta MN 74, MN i.500; for more refs. cf. PTSD s.v.).

What about the leap, as it were of faith, into commitment to the Buddhist path? Is the wishful desire for enlightenment as counterproductive or unrealistic as wishing to be delivered the moon on a platter? Wishing for the moon does become possible in the Mahāyāna in the form of wishing for rebirth in Sukhāvatī, for example, which in the textual history of the Larger *Sukhāvatī Sūtra* is eventually boiled down from a strenuous effort to being achievable by just one moment of sincere faith in Amitābha. But that is an anachronistic counter example to the way in which an impulse can be positive in the Pāli Canon, i.e. when it is a desire to engage with the path.

Chanda is healthy (*kusala*) in its formulation as one of the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyā dhammā*), namely the first of the subgroup of four bases of success (*iddhipāda*). These four, *chanda*, *virīya* (strength), *citta* (mind) and *vīmaṃsā* (investigation), are listed in a stock formula in many places

in the Canon, and discussed by Rupert GETHIN in his book on the *bodhipakkhiyā dhammā* (1992:81–103). GETHIN translates the first element of the formula as:

Here a bhikkhu develops the basis of success that is furnished both with concentration gained by means of desire to act, and with forces of endeavour.

(*chandasaṃādhīpadhānasamkhārasamannāgataṃ iddhipādaṃ bhāveti*; 1992:81)

As GETHIN points out, the *Iddhipādasamyutta* of the Samyutta Nikāya makes it clear that according to this still rather obscure definition the bases of success should be:

conceived of as consisting in an interplay of three basic things: meditative concentration, forces of endeavour (... simply, strength) and the particular means by which the meditative concentration is gained, namely the desire to act, strength, mind or investigation. (1992:81–82)

And:

If a *bhikkhu* gains concentration, gains one-pointedness of mind depending on desire [to act], this is called *chanda-samādhī*. (S v.268–269; transl. GETHIN 1992:81)

Thus he concludes that the *iddhipādas* are:

concerned with the development of facility and mastery in *samādhī* or ‘meditative’ concentration. (1992:102)

However, this understanding seems to emphasise *chanda*’s role within one’s practice, rather than as a motivator to set out on the Path.

Finally, there is one episode which arguably does embody the paradoxical manipulation of desire, and thus foreshadows Tantric developments. That is the story of Nanda, the Buddha’s half-brother (*kaniṭṭhabhātika*), told, for example, in the *Samgāma-vacara Jātaka* (182; J ii.92–95; where the verses are Canonical

though the prose is considered to be commentary). The Buddha was visiting Kapilavatthu and gave his bowl to the prince Nanda, who thus had to accompany the Lord when he left. His betrothed, Janapadakalyāṇī asked him to hurry back, but the Buddha thought he should ordain his relative (*yaṃ nūnāhaṃ Nandaṃ arahatte patitṭhaṇṇaṃ*; J ii.92). Nanda, however, was not happy in the order (*sāsane*), because of his affection for his beloved (*patibaddhacitto*).

The Buddha suggested they visit the Himalayas, a journey which they made through the sky, by his magical power (*iddhibalenā*). They did not stop there, flying on up to the Tāvātimsa heaven, where Nanda saw Sakka waited upon by dove-footed (*kakutapādā*; J ii.93) heavenly apsaras (*devaccharā*). The Buddha asked him if they were not more lovely than Janapadakalyāṇī; they were. The Buddha said that all he had to do to get these lovelies was become a member of the Saṃgha (*samanadhammaṃ katvā bhante imā accharā labhanti*). Nanda agrees to join, if the Buddha will guarantee (*pātibhogho hoti*) the promised delightful result, which he does. Nanda was in a hurry to get on with the deal, they went straight back to Jetavana, and the Buddha told his disciples what had happened.

Sāriputta tackles Nanda, challenging him that the story about the apsaras and the pledge means his 'living of the Holy Life' (*brahmacariyavāso*), his chastity, is founded on women and the *kleśas* (*mātugāmasannissito kilesasannissito*), and makes the new monk ashamed (*lajjāpesi*; J ii.94). All the Saṃgha make him ashamed. Nanda realises that he has done the wrong thing (*ayuttaṃ vata me kataṃ*), makes a real effort, and attains arhatship (*arahattaṃ patvā*). He goes to release the Buddha from his promise (*paṭissavaṃ*), but is assured that that had happened automatically the moment he attained arhatship.

Thereupon the Buddha reveals to the Saṃgha that Nanda was always ready to be advised (*ovādakkhamo*). For, as usual, the narrative is told as the frame to a Jātaka story of an earlier generation when Nanda was the nervous royal elephant persuaded by his mahoot, the Buddha-to-be *Bodhisatta* to be a warrior (*saṃgāmā-vācaro*).

In the *Udāna* there is a slightly different canonical version of the story, which begins instead with Nanda already ordained and yet feeling attraction for the lady who smiles at him (*Udāna* p.21ff). Peter MASEFIELD adds a note to his translation of this version:

This may be the only instance in the Suttapiṭaka of the Buddha's use of upāyakauśalya, in which he deceives an individual into doing, through the wrong motive, what is to his ultimate benefit, and which was to witness full development in the Lotus Sūtra. (MASEFIELD 1994:56, fn.13)

Nanda also has his own pair of verses in the *Theragāthā* (ThG 157–158), the second of which puts his success down to the skilful means of the Buddha (*upāyakausalēnāhaṃ buddhenādiccabandhunā-yoniso paṭipajjitvā bhavē cittāṃ udabbhahin ti Nando thero*; ThG 158). Āśvaghoṣa even composed an entire *kāvya*, the *Saundarananda*, on the subject of Nanda's love and longing for his wife, and how that was transformed into religious piety

Nanda's story is however different from the development in Tantric Buddhism of a homeopathic approach, eradicating the passions by means of the same. The main feature here is learning the lesson through shame, as well as, more controversially, the Buddha's telling of what might be called a lie, a verbal carrot. In the version in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakatthā* (i.115ff), the word for this is *āmisa* (Dhp-a i.122), meaning 'bait' (literally 'raw meat' or 'food'). Surely the Buddha cannot ever have intended to give one of his monks a heavenly consort? But that is his skilful means. The account does set up an opposition between desire for a woman and dedication to personal development, but does not explicitly

relate the sensual desire to a desire for self-improvement. It does describe an upwards progress from mundane pleasure, through divine delights, to spiritual satisfaction.

In Part I, I will move on to the next stage on our progress from early Buddhism and the Mahāyāna, to Tantric Buddhism and its relation to the earlier Mahāyāna.

But I must preface the main text with an important qualification, an apologetic one, that this whole study is provisional, for it marks the beginning of my own initiation into Tantric Buddhism. Although I will present a variety of original sources, I persist in talking about 'Tantric Buddhism', as though it were always a single animal. Of course, it is not. Nevertheless, I have striven to present the passages which I have selected with integrity, as much as possible in continuous excerpts, lest particular lines be read out of their controlling context. Similarly, I hope that there will not prove to be over-much distortion in the somewhat self-contained privileging here (especially in Part II) of the *abhiṣekas* over the rest of the disproportionately abundant textual corpus of Tantric Buddhist scripture and exegesis. All of this means that there will inevitably remain an enormous amount of work to be done, a task which has been largely neglected in the tradition of modern scholarship. To that sorry lack, I trust that the present thesis may contribute even a modicum of value, and not over-much misrepresentation.

Part I

Mantranaya, Mahāyāna and Buddhism: Unity in Diversity?

General Apologetic

The subject of my dissertation is Tantric Buddhist apologetics. In the Introduction I have discussed in brief what those three words refer to, singly and in apposition. But apologetics is more than simply the explanation of bizarre practices, which will be the subject of Part II below. For at the beginning of the Christian Era, for example, apologetics developed as a genre of 'reasoned defence' (OED s.v.). Early Christians such as Justin Martyr and Origen wrote *Apologias* for a readership made up of their own brothers in religion as well as in explanation of their movement for the contemporary pagans and Jews.

Etymologically, because of the 'away' (*apo-*) prefix of the word, apologetics is 'other-directed' (BERNABEO in ELIADE 1987: s.v.). In that case the author has to use terminology and a style familiar to that other. Moreover, as the same entry in *The Encyclopedia of Religions* asserts, often such other-directed treatises will end up being most popular within the author's own community. Tantric Buddhist apologetics do indeed seem to be addressed more to Tantric Buddhists than anyone else, hence a certain ambivalence in using that term.

A religious author might write a detailed statement of his beliefs not so much for the enlightenment of non-believers as to formulate a set of beliefs, for himself. Then, provided perhaps that he has been sufficiently orthodox, his society could take up the gist of that statement and make it their own. The level of ignorance amongst the majority of religious believers with regard to their tradition is indeed notorious (THOMAS 1971).

What one does not expect in the late-twentieth century discussion of apologetics is the bracketed proviso prefacing the main entry in ELIADE's *Encyclopedia*:

This entry, which is restricted to consideration of monotheistic religions... (ELIADE *ibid.*)

The earlier *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* had paved the way for the exclusive monotheism of much more recent apologetics. T. W. CRAFER had there defined the term as 'Christian defence against attacks by non-Christians' (HASTINGS 1908: s.v.), conceding that all early Christian literature is in a sense apologetic. It is one thing to say that all the literature is apologetic, but does one want to also say that all apologetic is Judaeo-Christian?

One of the most famous of all apologies is that which Plato wrote as a report of the trial of Socrates by the city of Athens in 399 BC. Both Plato and Xenophon reconstructed their teacher's defence, undoubtedly putting words into his mouth. Socrates, for his part, seems to have been more of the opinion offered by Benjamin JOWETT as advice to the gentleman: 'never apologise, never explain'. The context was the law court, and he accepted the penalty imposed of suicide by hemlock.

In the Classical Mediterranean legal terminology and ideology were crucial. Similarly brahmanical Indian orthopraxy is also defined by an extensive canonical code of law, *Dharmaśāstra* or *Dharmasmṛti*. The Buddhist community too was from the earliest days regulated by the meticulous prescriptions and proscriptions of the Vinaya, the Discipline. Regrettably, the present study will not be assessing how much non-explicit forensic rhetoric there is in the Tantric Buddhist apologetic texts, while we will be confronted with issues of Vinaya. CRAFER remarks that writers have defended not so much the beliefs of Christianity as the behaviour of Christians (HASTINGS 1908, s.v. 'apologetics'). We will find the same distinction useful in our analysis of Tantric Buddhist texts. After all, it is well known that in Indian culture orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy defines identity.

An unexpected feature of the entry for 'Apologetics' in HASTINGS' *Encyclopedia* is the author's unapologetic attack on Buddhism. It comes within an 'Excursus' on 'The General Superior-

ity of Christianity to other religions'. Part one is 'Polytheism', a generalised diatribe, and part two 'Buddhism':

This deserves a word of separate treatment, as its moral code is profoundly attractive, and it counts almost as many adherents as Christianity. But really it is not so much a religion as a philosophy, an inherently atheistic system which does not offer a real Deity for worship, and suggests no hope for a future life. The very fact that its followers have instinctively demanded an object of worship, has caused it to become corrupted and obscured by the introduction of pure polytheism.

Buddhist Tantra, more than Buddhism, has drawn almost exclusively criticism from Western authors. Even the majority of non-Buddhist Indian commentators of today and the past refer to Tantra as corrupted Buddhism. What features of Tantric Buddhism are so repellant to others? And are those aspects indeed crucial within the system, and if so, why? These are the questions we will answer in Part II below. There it is the distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions which must be clearly made. Tantric Buddhists may do or talk about things which are not agreeable to others, but are those features merely sufficient to bring about their stated goal, or are they necessary conditions?

But before that we should turn to the less controversial facet of the term apologetics. That is its function in establishing the agenda of a tradition through binary oppositions or coincidences, usually formulated in terms of 'us' and 'them'. Hence this chapter's questioning title: Mantranaya, Mahāyāna and Buddhism: Unity in Diversity?

Buddhologies

It has been suggested that my research be described as how Buddhism ended, to complement GOMBRICH's study of how it began. Yet the religion has not reached its end. What is incontrovertible is

that things inevitably changed. Thus, after the Buddha's enlightenment he formed a Saṃgha, after his death the Saṃgha created a Canon, and from then on Buddhists have continually composed new teachings, on both philosophy and the religious path. In terms of Indian linguistic analysis Buddhism is clearly defined: a Buddhist (*bauddha*) is one who studies or knows the teachings of the Buddha (cf. above p.8). That analysis means that one would expect all Buddhist canonical teachings to be finally attributable to the Buddha, in order for them to have scriptural authority. The earliest parts of the Buddhist Canon contain guidelines for the ascertainment of the authority of a teaching: in the first instance it can be relied upon if it is directly *buddhavacana*, the word of the Buddha. Additional grounds for authenticity are given in the Pāli Canon as the Four Great Authorities (*mahāpadesa*; in identical terms at AN ii.167–170 and DN ii.123–126).

But in the original indigenous definition of Buddhist, one term turns out to be too narrowly defined in relation to the whole history of Buddhist literature, and that is: 'the Buddha'. Siddhārtha, Śākyamuni Buddha, may have been historically the first to realise and reveal the Dharma. Nevertheless, with the Mahāyāna there developed a tradition of Sūtras taught in one or other Buddha realm (*kṣetra*), like parallel universes to our own, in which Bodhisattvas or Buddhas other than Śākyamuni reign and preach. Similarly, there evolved a Buddhology (lit. on the subject of the Buddha, by analogy with Christology) of a Buddha's three Bodies (*trikāya*): Dharmakāya, Saṃbhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya. This system is extremely important in Buddhist Tantra as well.

The model of the three bodies of a Buddha is perhaps inspired by the historical Buddha's physical and regrettable absence from the world after his death (*parinirvāṇa*). The primacy of his incarnation in the fifth century BC is modified by referring to that as the most material of three modes of being, the Emanation

Body (*nirmāṇakāya*). This magical creation (*nirmāṇa*) functions almost as an illusion: it appeared that the Buddha was born as Siddhārtha, won his enlightenment and taught the Dharma, but in fact, that is an oversimplification.

What really exists is the Dharmakāya (or *svābhāvikaḥ kāyaḥ*) which is the Enlightened being in its truest reality (cf. AbhSAA p.281 and VijñMāSi pp. 696–716, 762–813; HÖB s.v.). From that hypostasis, or underlying essence, the second level of Buddhology is manifested in the form of Saṃbhogakāyas, usually translated as Enjoyment Bodies (or Reward Bodies). Such Buddhas are not incarnate on our world, the Sahāloka (fr. Skt. *sahā*: the earth). Instead, they are active in Buddha fields adjacent to our universe, to which one may travel to hear the Dharma. Finally, Śākyamuni was a third-level emanation from the Saṃbhogakāya, a Nirmāṇakāya, not the fountainhead of Buddhology, but as it were a bottling in a human body of what can be tapped from that source.

Thus already in the Mahāyāna a complex reality was described, which allowed the Mahāyāna Sūtras to assert their canonical authenticity as authored by the Buddha in a space out of mundane time. In this way the tradition was able to bypass the problem of the illegitimacy of what would otherwise be anachronistic post-Buddha Buddhist revelation. We shall shortly return to the issue of the narrative setting of the Tantras, and the Buddhology of their self-proclaimed Buddhist authorship (cf. below p.83ff.).

First, instead of worrying about whether he could have been the revealer of later teachings, thus qualifying them as Buddha-word, our concern is with his own experience viewed from the later style of practice. In order to validate a new method of reaching a perhaps different enlightenment, it would seem desirable to depict the historical Buddha's ascension to that state in terms of the latest techniques. There are various accounts in Tantric texts which describe the Buddha's awakening in Tantric terms. The

narratives vary because Tantric Buddhism, or the Mantranaya, is itself a broad roof beneath which is grouped a variety of classes. Before relating relevant contents of Tantric scriptural texts, we should briefly discuss their classification within the system.

Tantric Buddhisms

A great deal of work to disentangle the differing classifications of the Tantras has been carried out by Harunaga ISAACSON, although he has yet to publish the results of his study. Much of what follows, as indeed much of this dissertation, is based on what I have learnt from ISAACSON directly. However, whatever here is incorrect, anecdotal, or conjectural is my own responsibility. Up until now scholars have done little more than reproduce the later Tibetan classifications (although cf. MIMAKI 1994, esp. fn. 17, pp.121–122). These tend to represent, at most, only the latest state of play in India at the time, and actually incorporate a huge amount of Tibetan scholastic innovation.

A basic and all-inclusive division of the Tantras is into the Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga and Yoganiruttara/Yoginī classes. The first three names appear to be related to a four-fold division of Śaivite Tantras. Later Śaivite tantras, the *Mṛgendra* and the *Mataṅga* are actually divided into four sections or *pādas*: *jñāna*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *caryā* (GOODALL 1998:lviii). However, this seems to be already a later development:

The names of the four occur as a group of basic topics which a tantra discusses, for example in the *Parākhya*, where they are referred to as *sādhana*s (Chapter 15 passim), and in the *Kiraṇa*, where they are *upāya* (Chapter 6 passim), and in other early sources where they evidently do not apply to text-divisions. (GOODALL *loc. cit.*:lviii-lix)

The last three topics, whose names became Tantra classes, refer to: specific ritual activity (*kriyā*), the meditation which is yoga, and daily practice or way of life in general (*caryā*). The fourth

is *jñāna* (knowledge). It may be a mark of the Tantric Buddhist integration of ritual and philosophy, or perhaps the lack of specifically Tantric philosophical teaching, that the Knowledge division within Śaivite texts has no reflex in Buddhist classifications of their Tantras.

Moreover, the group of four given above is itself not the only enumeration found in our Indian sources, and although, following Bu ston (1290–1364; MIMAKI 1994:121), it became a standard in Tibet was not so in India. Probably the earliest texts, Kriyā-tantras, were purely instrumentally ritualistic in contrast to which the later Yogatantras were soteriologically powerful. The Caryā classification was presumably inserted around the same time, to parallel the Śaivite scheme. The paradigmatic Caryātantra is the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi* Tantra, combining the prime characteristics of Kriyā and Yoga Tantras (and it has also been classified as an Ubhaya (Both) Tantra because of this feature).

In the eighth century the Yoga Tantra class was subdivided; the *Guhyasamāja* Tantra (and the *Māyājāla* and others) was classed as Mahāyoga. Otherwise it is the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* (translated into Chinese in 723 AD) which is the model Yoga Tantra. The *Guhyasamāja* taught ever less orthodox methods for winning enlightenment, including sexual yoga. Its eighteenth chapter is the *Samājottara*, composed later than the basic tantra, and often preserved separately in the manuscript transmission. In this text of the late eighth century we first find the group of four initiations, two of which are sexual (and which will be the subject of Part II here below). Nevertheless, the *Guhyasamāja* is often referred to as a Yogatantra, and the *mahā*- prefix simply brings out its greatness among the Yogatantras.

The final group of Indian Tantras is the Yoginītantras, represented first of all by the *Hevajra*, and also including amongst others the later *Laghuśaṃvara*, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa*, and finally the

Kālacakra Tantras. These are named for the prevalence of *yoginīs* amongst their cast of ritual players. While the *Guhyasamāja* saw itself only as a Yogatantra, the *Hevajra* does refer to itself as a Yoginītantra (HT I.vii.19c), thus setting itself apart as forming a new class of revelation. Yoginītantras are in the secondary literature often called Anuttarayoga. But this is based on a mistaken back translation of the Tibetan translation (*rnal byor bla med kyi rgyud*) of what appears in Sanskrit texts only as Yogānuttara or Yoganiruttara (cf. SANDERSON 1994: 97–98, fn.1).

Thus far we have taken note of a fourfold classification, in the form of three plus one, where the fourth member can have three different names, as well as the optional insertion of the Mahāyoga classification for the *Guhyasamāja*. The final alternative is a fivefold classification, consisting of the initial three, and then Yogottara, followed by the Yoganiruttara grouping we have just mentioned. The Yogottaratantras again include the *Guhyasamāja*. This time such texts are grouped separately because of their differences from the Yogatantras. The name Yogottara (Higher Yoga) identifies them as still related to Yogatantra, intermediate between that and the Yoginītantra. It seems likely that Yogottara and Yoganiruttara were classifications coined in order to show the internal consistency of the Tantric tradition, post-dating the composition of their scriptures. Above all, Yoga, Higher Yoga and Highest Yoga are names which enshrine the very typical Indian taxonomical method of incorporating innovation by the upward extension of a hierarchy of excellence.

This study will restrict itself to the Higher and Highest Yoga classes, with only a small amount of discussion of the fundamental Yogatantra, the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. However, the *Guhyasamāja* of Higher Yoga, which will be one of the texts central to our investigation, is often classed as a Yogatantra (in the *Abhiṣekanirukti*, for example, translated in its entirety in the Ap-

pendix to the present work).

From a letter to me from Harunaga ISAACSON:

Older and newer classifications certainly existed side by side. Thus we find... Abhayākaragupta using a four-fold classification quite some time after his predecessor Ratnākaraśānti had used a five-fold one, although in my opinion the four-fold is the older of the two schemes. Even the same author might well in different contexts (for instance to suit different exegetical requirements imposed by the different scriptures of scriptural passages he dealt with) use, I suspect, different schemes. (6.II.1997)

Indeed, these systems of classification lack taxonomical terminology. There is no term for ‘class’, ‘division’ or ‘category’; the Tantras are simply subdivided as tantras, without a definition of the subdivisions.

As I said right at the outset, Tantric Buddhism is a rather anomalous coining of a term for ‘a phenomenon which calls itself, in Sanskrit, *Mantranaya*, *Vajrayāna*, *Mantrayāna* or *Mantramahāyāna* (and apparently never *Tantrayāna*)’ (above p.8). Although the name is historically anomalous, it is terminologically meaningful.

‘Tantric Buddhism’ defines the religion as first and foremost Buddhism. ‘Buddhist Tantra’ makes a different claim, that one is dealing with the broader Indian phenomenon of Tantra, in its Buddhist manifestation or avatar. It seems less problematic to essentialise Buddhism than Tantra. Tantra is a common Sanskrit word for ‘text’ or rather chapter, as in the title of the collection of animal fables the *Pañcatantra*. It has an interesting parallel etymological relationship with our word text, via the Sanskrit root *tan*, to stretch (eg. the warp threads of a loom). The same Indo-European root is found in the English word tent, while text derives from a related verb ‘to weave’ (cf. for parallel haberdashery or tent-construction etymology *sūtra*, thread).

Tantra is metaphorically the arrangement of a system or framework, 'the regular order of ceremonies and rites' (APTE s.v.). It is, as we shall go on to detail in Part II, ritualistic. That may be the reason the texts under consideration were called Tantras, especially the first group of Kriyātantras, restricted to ritual (without soteriology).

The tradition commonly styles itself Mantranaya, which may be terminologically meaningful on several levels. Firstly, *naya*, or way, is a deliberate choice avoiding the standard Buddhist term for way, *yāna*.

In the earliest Buddhism the eight-fold Noble Path, the *mārga*, also became known as a *yāna*, or vehicle. When the Mahāyāna took that aggrandising name for itself, it very occasionally also referred contemptuously to earlier Buddhism as the Hīnayāna, the Inferior Way—although the preponderance of this name in the secondary literature is far out of proportion to occurrences in the Indian texts—as well as the more politically correct and much more usual Śrāvakayāna, the Way of the Hearers, since its followers listen to the teachings of the historical Buddha. The Mahāyānist use of the term may indeed also include an imputation of passivity for disciples who even when enlightened are not Bodhisattvas and hence not active for the sake of the whole world.

I would suggest, and we will find the supposition confirmed by our authors, that the Mantranaya is so-called precisely because it does not wish to set itself apart as a separate *yāna* from its direct predecessor, namely the Mahāyāna. The Mantranaya is thus a subdivision of the Mahāyāna, albeit claiming its status within that fold to be the highest. The name *Mantramahāyāna* which is also found supports my thesis.

The third term used is Vajrayāna, which represents a claim for independent validity as a distinct *yāna*. This is a less pervasive appellation. Nominal independence seems to have been a less

attractive idea, as is consonant with the Indian principle of upward extension, incorporating new methods and doctrines as the trumping of earlier teachings without wanting to formally break away from the notional continuity of tradition.

There may have been a historical progression from *naya* to *yāna*. This is exemplified in the titles of two texts which tackle the question of the relationships of the three ways of Buddhism (Śrāvakayāna, the Mahāyāna Pāramitānaya, and the Mahāyāna Mantranaya). First came Tripiṭakamālā's *Nayatrāyapradīpa*, and then Ratnākaraśānti's *Triyānavyavasthā*, both of which are known to survive only in their Tibetan translations. We will return to the first of these works below (pp.92–137).

The Historical Buddha's Tantric Enlightenment

What about the claim that the historical Buddha too availed himself of Tantric methods? We find this articulated in the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa*, for example, a Yoginī (Yoganiruttara, Highest Yoga) Tantra. Chapters I–VIII have been edited and translated by Christopher GEORGE (1974). However, the following account is found in chapter X, 'In Praise of Women' (*strīpraśaṃsāpaṭala*), for which I am using an unpublished edition made by Harunaga ISAACSON, to whom I am very grateful.

There the Lord Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa (Terribly Wrathful) tells first the accepted version of events:

In order to destroy the wrong idea of the world, the wise son of Māyādevī, [Siddhārtha Gautama,] abandoned his harem of 84,000. The revealer of the [supernatural] attainments of Buddha[-hood] went to the banks of the river Nirañjanā. There he repelled the Māras.

(*lokakaukṛtyanāśārthaṃ māyādevīsutaḥ sudhīḥ
caturaśītisahasrāṇi tyaktvā cāntaḥpuraṃ punaḥ.
gatvā nirañjanātīraṃ buddhasiddhiprakāśakaḥ
yāto mārān nirākṛtya.* CMT X.25–26c.)

The ‘wrong idea of the world’ here translates *kaukr̥tya* following the commentary (cf. below), while the earlier Pāli *kukkucca* refers differently to perturbations.

But:

That is not the way it was [on the level of] the ultimate truth. For the Buddha attained [Enlightenment] within his harem, blissful in union with Gopā. After all, true bliss is attained through the union of penis (*vajra*) and vagina (*padma*). Enlightenment is obtained through bliss. There is no bliss in separation from a woman. [The Buddha] practiced [apparent] separation in order to destroy the wrong idea of the world.

(*na caivaṃ paramārthataḥ.*
yasmād antaḥpure buddhaḥ siddho gopānvitaḥ sukhī
vajrapadmasamāyogāt satsukhaṃ labhyate yataḥ.
sukhena prāpyate bodhiḥ sukhaṃ na strīviyogataḥ
viyogaḥ kriyate yas tu lokakaukr̥tyahānaye. CMT X.26d-28)

We will return to this text when we come to consider in detail the sexual relations of Tantric Buddhist practitioners (cf. p.178ff. below). For now our focus is on the apologetic for what the Buddha himself did. His activity divides into two: first the centre stage renunciation and awakening about which everyone knows, and then the revelation of quite another physical act, previous to the disingenuous display of renunciation and usurping its efficacy.

The tantra’s account of these two episodes is tastefully sandwiched between closely parallel formulations of why the Buddha perpetrated his con trick on history:

in order to destroy the wrong idea of the world. (*lokakaukr̥tyanā-śārthaṃ... lokakaukr̥tyahānaye.* CMT X.25a, 28d)

The Sanskrit commentary, *Padmāvatī* (and again I have the text from Harunaga ISAACSON), glosses the first expression:

The wrong idea is something wrongly made. **The wrong idea** is this particular wrongly made thought: ‘There is no enlightenment by means of the cultivation of sensual pleasure’, **in order to**

destroy which [the Buddha abandoned his harem]. [His] intention was this— These men should be converted gradually to this very Path [of Buddhism] by this special means [of suppressing the truth].

(*kauṛṭyam* iti *kukṛtam*. *kāmasevayā na bodhir* iti *cittam* *kukṛtam* *eva kauṛṭyam* *tasya nāsārtham*. *ayam abhiprāyaḥ- krameṇa te 'sminn eva mārge 'vataranīyā anenopāyaviśeṣeṇeti*. *Padmāvatī ad loc.*).

Thus the commentary explains that the Buddha began his ministry with the employment of skilful means (*upāya*) for the sake of a deluded mankind.

The verses continue:

The Conqueror is a conjuror and performs under whatever guise can [make] these worldlings ready for Buddha[hood]. In every Sūtra and the Abhidharma he slandered women. He used to teach the various points of discipline in a language that conceals the truth. He even used to show [a way to] Enlightenment through the destruction of the five constituents [of a being].

(*yena yenaiva te lokā yānti buddhavinēyatām*
tena tenaiva rūpeṇa māyāvī nṛtyate jinaḥ.
sarvasūtrābhidharmena kṛtvā nindām tu yoṣitām
nānāśikṣāpadam bhāṣet tattvagopanabhāṣayā
nirvāṇam darśayec cāpi pañcaskandhavināśataḥ. CMT X.29–30).

The first of these verses is a version of a verse found in many Tantric texts, Buddhist and Śaivite, which emphasises the multiplicity of divine forms and their *ad hominem* versatility (cf. below p.148). *Ad hominem* is commonly used in English to refer to an argument, for example, addressed to a particular person (cf. OED s.v. 1st meaning: 'relating to or associated with a particular person'), but its more precise meaning in rhetoric is: '(of an argument) appealing to the emotions and not to reason' (*ibid* 2nd meaning). In this context it is precisely the second meaning

which I intend to convey, for the fourth *pāda* is itself a lively innovation, casting the Buddha as an illusionist (*māyāvī*) who dances or acts out a drama (*nṛtyate*), and is it not the principle of Tantric Buddhism to appeal to the *kleśas*- the emotions?

Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa goes on to detail the rabbits pulled by the Buddha out of his hat: scripture that blames women ('She made me do it!'); rules of behaviour which cloister disciples away from reality; and, for his final trick, *nirvāṇa* through obliterating the five *skandhas*.

A contrast is being drawn between the enlightenment (*bodhi*) achieved in sexual union and *nirvāṇa*. This last would then be an ellipsis for **pratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa* (not attested, but coined by me to contrast with the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva's *apraṭiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*), the pre-Mahāyāna irreversible enlightenment from which there is no return to *saṃsāra* to fulfil one's Bodhisattva vow to bring all beings to enlightenment. Such a critical interpretation of *nirvāṇa* prefigures the European nineteenth century objection that Buddhism offers only extinction as its *summum bonum* (cf. above p.35).

In response to his consort the Lady Perfection of Wisdom's request for further identification of Māyādevī's son and Gopā, Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa's punchline is our story's dénouement:

The son of Māyādevī am I, Caṇḍaroṣaṇa. The lady Gopā is you,
Perfection of Wisdom.

(*māyādevīsutaś cāhaṃ caṇḍaroṣaṇatām gataḥ*
tvam eva bhagavatī gopā prajñāpāramitātmikā. CMT X.31)

Not only has Tantric practice been legitimated by the revelation that the Buddha actually hit his mark (*siddhārtha*) disporting himself in the harem, but the Tantric Buddha is one and the same as the Siddhārtha of history. The *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇatantra* builds on the solid beginnings of Buddhism, adopting the founder's authorship for Tantric Buddhism. But it may be more realistic to

see it as a subversive agent. The tantra digs for itself a foundation deep beneath the existing structure of Buddhism, undermining the earlier tradition's historical basis. But where does this particular strategy for independence, or apologetic, begin?

This question is answered by the Tibetan mKhas grub rje (1385–1438) in the first chapter of his 'Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems' (*rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyas par br-jod*, ed. and transl. LESSING and WAYMAN 1978). He was the chief disciple of the dGe lugs pa patriarch Tsong kha pa (1357–1419). WAYMAN says that mKhas grub rje 'definitely' had as his main source the writings of the editor of the Tibetan canon Bu ston (1290–1364) a century earlier (LESSING and WAYMAN 1978:1). After typical opening verses the text explains the various accounts according to the greater and lesser vehicles of how the Teacher Bhagavān (*ston pa bcom ldan 'das*) became fully enlightened (LESSING and WAYMAN 1978:16–17).

We are not concerned here with what the later Tibetan tradition *per se* has to say about Tantric Buddhism, for that is a different story. Nevertheless, mKhas grub rje's account is useful in that it transmits earlier Indian scriptural and commentarial narratives. However it should not be relied on exclusively since, for example, there is no mention of the revealing Yoginītantra *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa* story discussed above. That is presumably because mKhas grub rje followed his teacher Tsong kha pa in emphasising the practice of the *Kālacakra tantra*, among the latest of Indian productions (although the composition of tantric scriptures continued in India right up till c.1200 AD, and for many centuries thereafter in Nepal) and one with which we will have almost no business (cf. below p.173).

Occasionally, the comments of such Tibetan authors do shed light on historically earlier issues. Thus, WAYMAN notes in his introduction to mKhas grub rje's work (1978:3) that both Bu ston

and mKhas grub rje point out that the Kriyā and Caryā tantras do not offer their own Tantric narratives of the enlightenment process of Śākyamuni. As WAYMAN surmises (*ibid.*), from mKhas grub rje's comments (1978:38–39), this is reason enough for the neglect, in Tibet at least, of those two classes of Tantras.

If they do not even pretend to have been implicated in the historical Buddha's enlightenment, they disqualify themselves from the group of the soteriologically efficacious. Granted this is late testimony, but it does confirm a perceived need to justify one's practice by associating it with that of the first Buddha of this aeon. The lack of Kriyā and Caryā tantra colonisation of the Buddha's enlightenment is significant in that those classes identified themselves not as means to enlightenment, but only pragmatically for *siddhis*, special mundane powers.

mKhas grub rje baldy states at the outset of his section on the Mantranaya that there is no contradiction between the teachings of the Kriyā and Caryā tantras and that of the Prajñāpāramitā on the method, i.e. the Buddha's method, of winning enlightenment (1978:24–25). The one crux distinguishing them from the pre-Mahāyāna account is that there it is the Saṃbhogakāya (cf. above p.65ff.) in particular which the Buddha had lacked (1978:18–19). Hence he was unable in the Śrāvakayāna tradition to abide in the Akaniṣṭha heaven and compassionately emanate Nirmāṇakāyas to save all beings.

Next mKhas grub rje relates what happened according to three commentators on the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, the exemplary Yoga tantra (1978:24–29). Ānandagarbha has the Bodhisattva in the Akaniṣṭha heaven at the time of his Yoga Tantric experience, only thereafter to be reborn as the son of Śuddhodana. Śākyamitra and Buddhaguhya say that he was already incarnate as a tenth stage Bodhisattva and there on the bank of the Nairāṇjana river in the fourth *dhyāna* when the following occurred: all the Buddhas of the ten directions gathered, and snapped their fingers to wake Sarvārthasiddhi from the *āśpharaṇaka* (space-filling)

samādhī. They warn:

You will not become fully enlightened (*samyaksambuddha*) by this *samādhī* alone.

In the versions where he is not already in Akaṇiṣṭha he is brought there, in the form of a *manomayakāya*, a mind-made body, leaving beside the river a more-or-less empty fruition body (*vīpākakāya*, an early term equivalent to the *rūpakāya*, predating the idea of the *nirmāṇakāya*). In the heaven the Buddha-to-be is given initiations of clothes (*vastra*) and diadem (*mukuta*), and then bade to enter the five *abhisambodhi*, after which he becomes Mahāvairocana. His Saṃbhogakāya stays in Akaṇiṣṭha. In a Vairocana Nirmāṇakāya he whizzes to the peak of Mount Sumeru, teaches the Yoga tantras, and then redescends to earth, in time to defeat Māra in two tellings (Śākyamitra and Buddhaguhya), or take birth as Siddhārtha in the third (Ānandagarbha).

One of the important features shared by all three of these accounts is that it is Śākyamuni himself, albeit as a Nirmāṇakāya, who is the author of the Yoga tantras. To compound the interrelationship of the three terms in the title question of this Part, the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, for example, is itself classified in its colophon as a Mahāyānasūtra. The 'All Buddhas' (*sarvatathāgata*-) of its own title proclaims its desire to be all-inclusive, which inclusivity is reiterated by 'The Collection' (*-saṃgraha*). The remaining word is *-tattva*-, reality or essence, which announces the text's intention to transcend.

Although mKhas grub rje does not make it clear, the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* itself redefines the historical Buddha's enlightenment. It is that account which the commentators transmitted. However, Ānandagarbha seems to have overlooked the contextual details given in the root text (if he used it) when he placed the celestial episodes even before the Buddha's birth as the prince. Perhaps he wanted to maintain a clear temporal

distinction between the Buddha's tantric enlightenment and the standard account of his renunciation and attainment besides the Nairāñjana.

SNELGROVE has translated the relevant passages (1987:120, 240–242), so I will summarise, as I have done with the translation of mKhas grub rje's text. SNELGROVE's two extracts are at the beginning and at the end of the tantra. They are framing elements intended to support the text stretched between them.

The rerouting of the historical Buddha onto a tantric path is provoked by all the Tathāgatas asking him how he intends to succeed through exerting himself in every privation (*sarvaduḥkarāṇi*), out of ignorance (*-anabhijñatayā*) of the truth (*-tattva-*) of all the Tathāgatas (CHANDRA 1987:4)? His progress is described in terms of the five *abhisambodhis* which all the Tathāgatas teach him by means of the five *mantras*. They also initiate (*abhiṣeka*) him with the *vajra* name Vajradhātu. Śākyamuni is indeed so-called, at the end of this passage for example (1987:5), but elsewhere in the text he is more usually named Sarvārthasiddhi, Vairocana or Vajradhātu.

At the very end of the tantra (CHANDRA 1987:212) this Vairocana returns from the peak of Mount Sumeru to the place of enlightenment (*bodhimaṇḍa*), where he seats himself beneath the Lord Bodhi tree, takes some grass and pronounces two verses. He does this 'in accordance with the world' (*lokānuvartanatayā*), i.e. conforming to the mundane expectations of what is a legitimate route to enlightenment. SNELGROVE's excerpt ends here, but the narrative continues.

The gods of the realm of desire (*kāmāvacarā devā*) ask the Buddha why he is practising such fierce and dreadful suffering for the sake of enlightenment (*tīvrāṇy evaṃ raudrāṇi bodhyārthāya duḥkhāni*). His cryptic response is:

Know, friends, that I will reach enlightenment. (*pratipadyata māṛṣā mama bodhiṃ prāptum iti*)

Uncomprehending (*ajānantah*) the gods go to ask their superiors what this news (*vr̥ttāntah*) means. In the end the highest authority, Maheśvara, explains that the Tathāgata will be enlightened 'in accordance with the world' (*lokānuvartanātayā*). He reminds them that the Tathāgata is not a mere mortal (*na... mānuṣaḥ*), for Tathāgatas are gods. The gods return to the Buddha at the site of enlightenment. There, eventually, once again 'in accordance with the world' (*lokānuvartanātayā*, CHANDRA 1987:213), he subdues the Māras and attains *samyaksambodhi*.

The Yogatantra *Tattvasaṃgraha*, like the Yoginī *Caṇḍamahā-roṣaṇa*, is keen to claim the enlightenment of the historical Buddha for its own. SNELGROVE puts it that:

There was an apparent difficulty attributing these to Śākyamuni unless it could be shown at the same time that he had himself realized at the time of his enlightenment the type of ritual yoga with which these works are primarily concerned. (1987:120)

Nevertheless, as mKhas grub rje pronounces (1978:34–35), the Teacher Bhagavān's method is not discussed in such Yoginītantras as the *Hevajra*, *Samvara* and *Kālacakra*. He includes the *Guhyasamāja* and its account within the Yoganiruttara group although, as we saw above, it was classified first as a Yoga and then as a Mahāyoga or Yogottara text. The tantra itself is silent on this point, but mKhas grub rje tells us that both the Ārya and Jñānapāda schools of exegesis share the same narrative. Paraphrasing mKhas grub rje's retelling of their versions (LESSING and WAYMAN 1978:36–39): as was the case in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, the Buddha has been collecting the twin accumulations for three countless aeons on the Way of the Perfections. In the same space-filling *samādhi*, he is snapped out of it and warned of inevitable failure by all the Buddhas of the ten directions. He pleads for guidance.

Tillottamā (*Thig le mchog ma*) the daughter of the gods is summoned, and with her the Buddha is given the third Wisdom-Knowledge Initiation (*prajñājñānābhīṣeka*). This ritual mode of

sexual union is one of the distinguishing features of what we are calling Higher Tantric practice, and will be the subject of Part II below. In the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa* the Buddha simply attained enlightenment erotically in his harem. That is a fuzzy account of what Śākyamuni really did. Here, in the commentarial tradition, we find the technical location of Śākyamuni within the structure of initiation.

One feature which will contrast with the structure taught in ritual manuals is that the Buddha receives what was normally the third initiation without either the preceding initial group or the second Secret Initiation (*guhyābhiṣeka*). mKhas grub rje quotes a comment that the absence of the initial group, the initiation of the flask and so on, makes this ‘an exceptional case of the rite’ (*cho ga pa’i dmigs bsal*; LESSING and WAYMAN 1987:38–39). However, a further crucial factor of Higher Tantric Buddhism, which is also a *sine qua non* for the Secret Initiation, is the presence of and dependence on a teacher. Initiations require an initiating teacher, and who is Śākyamuni’s teacher? The same is true for the fourth initiation, the Explanation of Reality (*tattvadeśanā*), and in mKhas grub rje’s retelling this is indeed bestowed, by all the Buddhas (*ibid.*). They are the Buddha’s teachers and it remains to be explained why he does not receive the second initiation from them.

Following the fourth initiation Śākyamuni sheds at dawn the last and subtlest mental defilements (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) and so becomes Vajradhara. The lesson, according to mKhas grub rje, has nothing to do with the initiations, but is that:

Although one may be able to reach the tenth stage solely along the Pāramitā path, to become finally a complete Buddha, it is certainly necessary for one to enter the incomparable (*anuttara*) Mantra path. Otherwise it is impossible to become a complete Buddha. (*ibid.*)

We will shortly investigate some arguments concerning what sort

of enlightenment non-tantric Bodhisattvas can hope for.

The Buddha, Author of the Higher Tantras

Having dealt with traditions of the historical Buddha's tantric enlightenment, we should briefly consider claims for his authorship of the tantras and Tantric Buddhism. The new wave needed to give their texts canonical authority, which which one would expect to gain by ascribing them to the preeminent teacher, the Buddha. Śākyamuni turned the wheel of the dharma for the first time in the deer-park at Sarnath right at the beginning of his ministry. In the end, the Mahāyāna posited three turnings of the wheel (SNELLGROVE 1987:79–116). Since this is a retroactive typology even the second turning is not so-called within its own texts.

The three-fold classification is ratified in the *Sandhinirmocanasūtra*, reproduced in Bu ston and here summarised from SNELLGROVE's account (1987:94–95). According to that tradition the second turning was that of the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus of the Mahāyāna and Mādhyamaka, while the *Sandhinirmocana* is itself a product of the third turning, that of Cittamātra-Yogācāra. Since this is a Cittamātra classification, naturally it does not include the Tantras. There are references to the turning of the wheel of dharma (*-dharma cakrapravartana*) of the Mantranaya or *vajranaya*, particularly in the Kālacakra literature, all reinforcing the perceived unity of Buddhism.

The literary settings (*nidānavākya*) of many tantras open with the classical validating:

Thus have I heard... (*evaṃ mayā śrutam*)

This explicitly puts them on the same level as the *sūtras* of the earliest canon, and parallel to Vedic revelation (*śruti*), in having being directly received from an authority into the ear of the first reciter of the scripture, the *saṃgītikāra*. But these three words of

convention are almost immediately drowned out by the graphic description of a highly irregular location:

At one time the Lord dwelt in the vaginas of vajra women who are the body, speech and mind of all the Tathāgatas.

(*ekasmin samaye bhagavān sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittavajrayoṣi-dbhageṣu*¹ *vijahāra*; HT I.i.; cf. TSUDA's discussion 1982).

SNELGROVE translates:

Thus have I heard— at one time the Lord dwelt in bliss with the Vajrayoginī who is the Body, Speech and Mind of all the Buddhas. (1959:47)

He makes a policy statement in his introduction:

It must further be admitted that even the present translation expunges short passages here and there, in which nothing of value is lost. (1959:8)

But next he appropriates the tradition, claiming to be its (first or only?) sensitive interpreter:

It would not be fair to expect such sensitiveness on this score from our commentators... (*ibid.*).

Further in the same 'Apologetic' first part of his Introduction SNELGROVE argues that rearranging the rather random order of the text would have helped (1959:10). Then he makes the curious assertion that the work 'already benefits considerably from its transference into English' (*ibid.*). He says that 'the translation follows the text faithfully unless indicated in the notes' (*ibid.*). However, his translation of our opening line lacks any such note to indicate his 'sensitiveness'. It is unlikely that SNELGROVE was concerned about prosecution, since the Obscene Publications Act

1 -cittavajra-] corr. MSS (according to ISAACSON): ed. -cittahṛdayavajra-

was not passed until 1959, although in the 1960's authors and publishers in the UK were prosecuted under that act.

His position has shifted noticeably by the time he wrote *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (1987). There his revised translation reads:

Thus have I heard: at one time the Lord reposed in the vaginas of the *Vajra*-maidens— the heart of the Body, Speech and Mind of all Buddhas. (1987:121)

In a footnote thereto he writes:

Thus begin both the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Hevajra Tantras*, both available in their Buddhist Sanskrit editions. In my translation of the *Hevajra Tantra* I have tended to gloss over such imagery, as indeed so often do the Tibetans.

The remark about Tibetans is true, and the line under discussion is a case in point.

The Tibetan translation published by SNELGROVE chooses to do no more than transliterate the pertinent Sanskrit stem for vagina (*bha ga*; without giving it a plural marker), perhaps in order further to minimise potential embarrassment, but maybe also in order to remind of the pun with Lord (*bhagavān*). It is possible that the Sanskrit plural (*-bhageṣu*) is after all fairly represented in SNELGROVE's original metaphorical translation 'dwelt in bliss'. For *bhaga* can also refer to 'love, affection' and 'amorous dalliance or sport, pleasure' (Apte s.v. meanings 10 and 11, before 12 'the pudendum muliebre'). Is it not somewhat easier to visualise a description of the Lord dwelling 'in amours' with many women rather than literally in their vaginas?

Our most recent investigations began with the fact that the two Higher Tantras central to this study (the Yoga/Mahāyoga/Yogottara *Guhyasamāja* and Yoginī/Yoganiruttara/Yogānuttara *Hevajra*) have as their first words the same phrase as the oldest Buddhist sūtras. Those words in themselves define the texts they introduce as authoritative revelation. The Tantras for their part are in this way

explicitly claiming membership of the Buddhist canon. But we also examined the unorthodox setting of the previously authenticated audience. As with the narratives discussed above which relegate to a pious fiction the traditional account of the Buddha's enlightenment, the new erotic context of the Tantras appears also to undermine the older prosaic settings.

What about the other corpus of textual evidence, namely the tradition's secondary literature of authored treatises and commentaries?

Apologetic Commentators

The Tibetan canon as first compiled by Bu ston differentiates between the two types of literature. It consists of the *bKa' gyur*, 'The Translated Word [of the Buddha]', and the *bsTan gyur*, 'The Translated Treatises,' commentaries on the word of the Buddha. SNELGROVE gives figures for the respective numbers of volumes of Tantric texts in each part (1959:3–4): in the *bKa' gyur* 22 out of a total of 99 volumes are Tantras, and in the Narthang *bsTan gyur* there are 137 volumes of commentaries on the Tantras and only 86 on the Sūtras, i.e. the rest. So much to illustrate the large amount of Tantric scripture preserved in Tibet and the even larger proportion of secondary literature on it. From such theoretical texts we shall discover how Indian commentators saw the relationships within Buddhism, above all in terms of unity or diversity of the goal and means to its achievement.

The Tattvaratnāvalī and the Subhāṣitasamgraha

The *Tattvaratnāvalī*, included in the *Advayavajrasamgraha*, is an important source for the question of the relationship between Tantric and the rest of Buddhism. It states at the outset:

There are three vehicles: that of the Śrāvakas, of the Pratyeka[buddhas] and the Great Vehicle. There are four schools of philosophy: Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra and Madhyamaka. The Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekayāna are explained by the Vaibhāṣika school. The Mahāyāna is two fold, namely the Pāramitānaya and Mantranaya. The Pāramitānaya is explained by the Sautrāntika, Yogācāra and Madhyamaka schools, but the Mantranaya by Yogācāra and Madhyamaka.

(*tatra trīṇi yānāni: śrāvakayānaṃ, pratyekabuddhayānaṃ, mahāyānaṃ ceti. sthitayaś catasraḥ: vaibhāṣikasautrāntikayogācāramadhyamakabheda. tatra ca vaibhāṣikasthityā śrāvakayānaṃ pratyekayānaṃ ca vyākhyāyate. mahāyānaṃ ca dvividhaṃ: pāramitānaya mantranayaś ceti. tatra yaḥ pāramitānayaḥ sautrāntikayo-*

gācāramadhyamakasthityā vyākhyāyate. mantranayas tu yogācāramadhyamakasthityā vyākhyāyate. TaRaĀvalī p.14)

Here the Mahāyāna includes both *nayas*, in order to preserve the notional integrity of this *yāna*, as described above (p.72). The following pages are an elaborate further sub-dividing of the Śrāvakayāna and Pāramitānaya into parts for those of excellent, middling and lowly abilities, with interesting definitions of their beliefs and practices (cf. the imperfect translation of Mark TATZ, 1990:494–502).

When the discussion reaches the Mantranaya, Advayavajra says:

We do not here analyse the Mantranaya [as we did the other ways], because of its great profundity, because it is the province of men who are committed to the profound way, and because of the extensiveness of its teachings on the means for accomplishing the four seals and so on.

(mantranayas tv asmābhir¹ ihātigambhīratvād gambhīranayādhi-muktikapuruṣaviṣayatvāt caturmudrādisāadhanaprakāṣanavistartvāc ca na vyākriyate. TaRaĀvalī p.21)

A primary obstacle to evaluating Tantric Buddhism is its esoteric status.

Nevertheless, Advayavajra goes on to quote a famous verse:

For: ‘Even if the aim is the same, the mantra teaching is distinguished [from that of the Perfections] by its lack of confusion, many methods, easiness and appropriateness for those of sharp faculties,’

and adds that he has written a text called the *Sekanirṇaya* on this matter.

*(tathā ca-
ekārthatve ’py asaṃmohāt bahūpāyād aduṣkarāt*

¹ asmābhir] corr.: ed. asmadvidhair

*tīkṣṇendriyādhikārāc ca mantraśāstraṃ viśiṣyate.
kṛtaś cāsmābhir atra sekanirṇayo nāma granthaḥ. ibid. ctd.)*

We will return later to this verse from Tripiṭakamāla's *Nayatraya-pradīpa*, cited also in many other texts (cf. below p.92 and p.97ff.).

The objection is offered:

But, if the truth which is indeed demonstrated in the Mahāyāna is the ultimate truth, then why did the Lord teach the Śrāvaka and Pratyeka yānas?

(nanu yadi mahāyānanirṇīta evārthaḥ paramārtho 'sti, asya kim arthaṃ tarhi śrāvakapratyekayāne bhagavān deśitavān? ibid. ctd.)

'Indeed' translates *eva*, a small Sanskrit enclitic which is ambiguous and hence difficult to translate with certainty, since it can strictly stress 'only' as well as simply giving emphasis, in the way I have translated it here.

The point is not valid, because the creation of those two vehicles was as [rungs of] a ladder– [or stepping-stones–] which are purely so that one gains that which is to be gained through, [i.e. that which is the goal of,] the Mahāyāna. For it has been taught– 'This means has been created by the Buddhas to be as it were a ladder for a beginner to reach the ultimate truth.' (*Āloka-māla*, v.176)

In the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka* too it is taught–

'There is one vehicle, and one way, and one is this teaching of the guides. I teach [a plurality of] vehicles as devices in accordance with my skillfulness in means.'

And Nāgārjuna taught– 'Since the Dharmadhātu is undivided, the Way is undivided, master. You have spoken the three vehicles in order to convert beings.' (*Nairupamyastava*, v.21)

And elsewhere also, [Dharmakīrti] said–

'As for liberation, [it arises] from seeing emptiness. All the other meditations have that [seeing] as their purpose. (*Pramāṇavarttika*, *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter, v.253ab, transl. FRANCO 1997:82)

(*tan na, mahāyānaprāpyaprāpaṇārtham eva śrāvakapratyekayāna-*
sopānayoṛnirmāṇāt. tad uktam—
ādikarmikasattvasya paramārthāvatāraṇe
upāyas tv ayam sambuddhaiḥ sopānam iva nirmitaḥ.
saddharmapūṇḍarīke 'py uktam—
eka hi yāna nayaś ca ekaḥ ekā ceyam deśanā nāyakānām
upāyakauśalya mamevarūpaṃ yantrāṇi yānāny upadarśayāmi.
nāgārjunapādair apy uktam—
dharmadhātor asaṃbhedād yānabhedo² 'sti na, prabho.
yānatritayam ākhyātaṃ tvayā sattvāvatārataḥ.
anyatrāpy uktam—
muktis tu śūnyatādṛṣṭes tadarthāḥ śeṣabhāvanāḥ.³ TaRaĀvalī 21–
 22)

This passage was prefaced with the disclaimer that the author would not enter into public apologetics of Tantra. Next came the verse of Tripiṭakamāla which elevates the ‘science of Tantra’ (*mantrasāstra*) above other Buddhisms for four reasons, but not, as the first words of the verse concede (*ekārthatve 'py*), because it is correct whereas the rest are wrong. Nevertheless, the objection is made that if the Mahāyāna itself contains the true teaching, surely the other non-Mahāyāna traditions are redundant? In the following Advayavajra treads a double path of acknowledging that all *yānas* are one, while at the same time demoting the Śrāvaka and Pratyeka ways to lowly rungs on the climb to the goal (*prāpya*) which is, by implication, only obtainable in the Mahāyāna. They may just be stepping stones, but as the Mahāyāna ‘Lotus of the Good Law’ verse proclaims they are mechanisms (*yantra*) invented out of necessity through the power of the Buddha’s insight into the means necessary (*upāyakauśalya*) for his mission.

2 yānabhedo] corr.: ed. dhyānabhedo; cf. same verse in *Subhāṣitasamgraha* 1903:388, cited below p.91.

3 śūnyatādṛṣṭes tadarthāḥ śeṣabhāvanāḥ] FRANCO 1997:82: ed. śūnyatādṛṣṭis tadarthāśeṣabhāvanā iti.

In Advayavajra's text the Mahāyāna is one, including Tantric Buddhism within it. Because the Mantranaya is not to be openly analysed, its place in the argument is taken by the substitute Mahāyāna, which may not be a good fit. The resultant passage is thus finally little more than a reflex of one strand, the *ekayāna* view, of Mahāyāna theory. Moreover, the single *yāna*, once all is said and done, is ultimately besides the point, as could also be illustrated by the Buddha's famous simile of the raft (*kullūpama* MN i.134–135). Not only is there no function any more for the *yāna* to fulfil, but it thereby ceases to have any existence. Before signing off, Advayavajra's final citation is of the *Laṅkāvatāra*:

There is no end of vehicles, as long as the mind is preoccupied.
But once the mind has ceased its revolving there is no vehicle,
nor indeed beings in motion.

(*yānānām nāsti vai niṣṭhā yāvac cittam pravartate
parāvṛtte tu vai citte na yānam nāpi yāyinaḥ*. TaRaĀvalī p.22=
LaĀv p.135)

Much longer than the *Tattvaratnāvalī*, and anonymous, is the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, which also explains the relative virtues of different types of Buddhism, from the Tantric Buddhist point of view. The text quotes the same verse of Nāgārjuna as Advayavajra did (cf. above p.89), in support of its citation of the opening line of Dignāga's *Prajñāpāramitāpiṇḍārthasamgraha*:

'The non-dual knowledge which is the Perfection of Wisdom is the Tathāgata.'

If it is the Perfection of Wisdom which is established in every Vehicle, how then can the Vehicles be divided?

(*yad āha—prajñāpāramitā jñānam advayam, sā tathāgata iti. prajñā-
pāramitāiva cet sarvayāne vyavasthitā katham tarhi yānabhedaḥ?
āha-
dharmaḍhātor asaṃbhedaḍ yānabhedo 'sti na, prabho.
yānatritayam ākhyātaṃ tvayā sattvāvatārataḥ*. SuSaṃ 1903:388)

Once again it is the Perfection component of the Mahāyāna which is said to be represented throughout Buddhism, because

it is itself above all non-dual, if only in the form of the identical Tathāgata, ensuring unity within the diversity of Ways.

That work also quotes Tripiṭakamāla in response to its own earlier question: ‘What is the means?’ (SuSaṃ 1903:397):

Many means have been taught in the mantra system according to the two stages of generation and completion, because of the force of people’s propensities.

(*yat punar uktam ‘kaś ca upāya’ iti atrocyaṭe. sattvāśayaśāḍ utpattyutpannakramapratyekabhedena bahutaropāyo mantraśāstre deśitaḥ*. SuSaṃ 1904:31)

Then follows Tripiṭakamāla’s verse, and:

Therefore, in this way there are many methods even in the completion stage.

(*tasmād anena krameṇotpannakrame⁴ ‘pi bahūpāyaḥ*)

Quotes from the *siddhas* and various tantras are given to explain the variety of methods, one of Tripiṭakamāla’s four distinguishing features of Tantric Buddhism.

Tripiṭakamāla’s Nayatrayapradīpa

Unfortunately, Tripiṭakamāla’s work, the *Nayatrayapradīpa*, survives only in its Tibetan translation (*Tshul gsum gyi sgron ma*). We have already seen his verse cited twice, and it was repeatedly quoted as an important statement of faith in the unity in diversity of Buddhism. But the author is not accredited in the Indian citations, a feature common enough in such literature, and I know of no discussion of the text there. The Tibetan translation attributes it to *Tripiṭakamala, which can easily be emended to Tripiṭakamāla (as is silently done in the published catalogues);

4 BENDALL notes that de la VALLÉE POUSSIN suggested to him that -*utpattikrama*- must be meant, but that is probably incorrect.

better ‘Who has as a garland the three baskets’ [of scripture], than ‘Who has as an impurity the three baskets’. It is also possible that Tripiṭakamala is a haplographical error for *Tripiṭakakamala. Unfortunately the Tibetan translation is often very obscure and needs a great deal of correction, making it sometimes unusable for my purposes here.

The Greatness of the Mahāyāna

The text proceeds through a definition of the hierarchy of the three ways (*naya*, *tshul*) in the title, but here the three are: the Śrāvakayāna (*nyan thos kyi theg pa*) followed by the two subdivisions of the Mahāyāna (*theg pa chen po*). After discussing the Śrāvakayāna, Tripiṭaka says:

[Now I] shall explain what distinguishes the Mahāyāna from the Way of the Tīrthikas (*mu stegs kyi tshul*):

The Mahāyāna is superior because of the previous vow [of the Bodhisattva to postpone non-dynamic (**pratiṣṭhita*) enlightenment out of compassion for all beings], and because of the entry [into the way of the Bodhisattva], and also because of its profundity [in doctrine (*darśana*), the truth of emptiness,] and excellence, [the enactment of compassion (*caryā*),] and because [one] obtains [thereby] the irreversible fruit [which obtains from the eighth, if not the seventh, Bodhisattva stage onwards (cf. below p.247)].

(*mu stegs kyi tshul las theg pa chen po'i khyad par gang yin pa de brjod par bya'o* /

/ *smon lam dang ni 'jug pa dang* /

/ *de bzhin zab dang rgya che nyid* /

/ *mi ldog 'bras bu thob bas kyang* /

/ *theg pa chen po khyad par 'phags* / NaTraPra D 13v3–4, P 13b3–4).

After a few folios of demonstration of the superiority of the *Pāramitāmahāyāna* over the Way of Śrāvakas we come to Tantric Buddhism:

Here [one might] object: ‘If the Way of the Perfections, which [consists of the above-named features,] the previous vow [of the Bodhisattva] and so on, teaches [the means for] accumulating the cause[s] of the fruit which is the highest enlightenment, then what, given that the previous vow and so on are causes for attaining the irreversible state (*mi ’pho ba’i gnas*; **avaivartyapada*), is the point of teaching the *Mantramahāyāna*? [Moreover], that [fruit, i.e.] omniscience, arises from the fulfilment (*rab kyi mthar thug pa nyid*, **agraniṣṭha*) of the practice of each of the [four *brahmavihāras*] Loving Kindness (*maitrī*), Compassion (*karuṇā*) and so on, and from the [perfection of] Giving (*dāna*) which is motivated (*kun nas slong ba*) thereby, and from the perfection of Discipline (*śīla*), and [the perfections *kṣānti*, *vīrya*, *dhyāna*, and especially also, *prajñā*]. In the Mantranaya rites are taught which normally (*phal cher*) contradict these [*brahmavihāras* and the perfections they motivate], [namely] the practices of Overpowering (*vaśīkaraṇa*), Bewitching (*abhicāra*) and so on. In as much as these are caused by Passion (*rāga*) and the other [*kleśas*], they are not motivated by Loving Kindness (*maitrī*).’

(/’dir brgal ba gal te bla na med pa’i byang chub kyi ’bras bu’i rgyu’i tshogs ni smon lam la sogs pa yin par pha rol tu phyin pa’i tshul las ston la / de ltar na smon lam la sogs pa ni mi ’pho ba’i gnas thob pa’i rgyur gyur pa nyid yin pas gsang sngags kyi theg pa chen po bstan pas ci zhig bya / rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa te yang byams pa dang snying rje la sogs pa ma lus pa goms par byas pa’i rab kyi mthar thug pa nyid dang / des kun nas slong ba’i⁵ sbyin pa dang / tshul khrims la sogs pa las ’byung ba yin no / / gsang sngags kyi tshul las ni phal cher de dang ’gal ba’i bya ba rnams kun du ston te / dbang du bya ba dang / mngon spyod la sogs pa’i las rnams ni ’dod chags la sogs pa’i rgyu las byung ba’i phyir byams pas⁶ kun nas slong ba⁷ ma yin la / NaTraPra D 16r2–5, P 17a4–7).

5 slong ba’i] D: P blang ba’i

6 byams pas] D: P byams pa’i

7 slong ba] D: P bslang ba

The objection is a prologue to why the Mantranaya is excellent, attacking what will be defended. Here we enter into the apologetics of Tantric Buddhism.

The first question is what is the use of introducing Tantric Buddhism when the Way of the Perfections has already been shown to be sufficient for winning an irreversible enlightenment. The attainment of this goal is said to be brought about through the four kinds of boundless love taught already in the earliest Buddhist scriptures, together with the Mahāyāna perfections they inspire. A Bodhisattva applies himself to the enactment of his boundless love through perfecting giving and the rest, which is the realisation of his primary vow, to work for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Even before the Higher Yoga Tantras, Tantric Buddhism taught 'the four rites' (*catuḥ karmāṇi*, *las bzhi*; SNELLGROVE 1987:238, cf. also *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Yogatantra* SKORUPSKI 1983:68–72, 220–224). The two referred to here are 'getting someone into your power' and 'tranquilising' (*śāntika*, equivalent to *abhicāra*). These are objected to since they contradict the depiction of the Buddhist path as all love and good behaviour.

The objector created by Tripiṭaka complains about the four non-soteriological rites, but does not even mention the sexual relations famously involved in Higher Tantric practice. Nevertheless, it is probably on his mind, because the following line points up the opposition between compassion (*maitrī*, *karuṇā*), and passion (*rāga*). Passion is a defilement (*kleśa*) because it is bound up with the other two *kleśas*, delusion (*moha*) and hatred (*dveṣa*).

Anyway, the text continues, it is part of the scriptural tradition, and thus incontrovertible that passion leads to trouble:

The Lord has said that practices which involve *rāga* and so on bring about bad rebirths. [And] it is taught in the *Saddharma-smṛtyupasthāna*, for example:

‘Those afflicted by passion, the goose and pigeon and so on, and the ass, being passionate, [they] go [endlessly] from rebirth to rebirth.’

(*'dod chags la sogs pa la rab tu 'jug pa'i las rnams las ni ngan 'gor
'gro bar bcom ldan 'das kyis gsungs te / dam pa'i chos dran pa nye
bar gzahag pa la sogs pa las /
'dod chags kyis ni gdungs pa rnams /
/ ngang pa phug ron la sogs dang /
/ bong bu 'dod chags can rnams kyis*⁸
*// skye gnas sngon*⁹ *sogs skye gnas skye / zhe bshad pa yin no / ibid.*
ctd.)

Passion is an animal instinct, the indulgence of which will bring one to an animal rebirth if not worse. Tantric Buddhism is worse than useless, the initial objection, because it generates passion which drives one on in the round of *samsāra*.

Furthermore, [the objection continues,] the teaching here [in the Mantranaya] of rites such as those to be enjoyed (*bza' ba yin pa*, **bhaksya*) and those not to be enjoyed, is not praised even by those beings in *samsāra* who are not wise, so (*na*), how could those greatly compassionate ones who regard all beings without exception as like an only son engage therein?

(*gang yang 'dir bza' ba dang / bza' ba ma yin pa la sogs pa'i bya ba
ston pa de ni rnam par mkhas pa dang bral ba'i 'khor ba pa rnams
kyis kyang bsngags pa ma yin na ji ltar 'gro ba ma lus pa la bu gcig
pa ltar sems pa'i snying rje chen po dang ltan pa rnams de la 'jug
par 'gyur / ibid. ctd.*)

The first part of the argument here is that it is common-sense to vilify and be disgusted by antinomian, shocking or bizarre behaviour. Tantric Buddhism is presented as *prima facie* beyond the pale of respectable society. However, albeit these rites are not

8 kyis] D: P kyī

9 sngon] D: P srin

praised by those who are not wise, that still leaves room for them to be appreciated by the wise. But excellence in intelligence is nought without compassion. A Bodhisattva could not possibly bring himself to perform such rites, directed towards the brotherhood of man he looks on as his only child.

The Four Distinctions of the Mantranaya

The opposition has objected that Tantric Buddhism cannot be compatible with the rest of the Mahāyāna, let alone have any intrinsic value or superiority. The time has come for Tripiṭaka to put his case for the Mantranaya:

Now, the Lord taught the Mantramahāyāna as a special cause (**viśiṣṭahetu*) for those who have a mind free of error (*blo phyin ci ma log pa'i sems dang ldan pa*; **aviparyāśabuddhisāṅkalpa/citta*) [and] belong to the class (**kula*) of the great-souled ones (**mahā-tmas*).

(*l gsang sngags kyi theg pa chen po ni bdag nyid che ba nyid*¹⁰ *de'i rigs can gyis*¹¹ *blo phyin ci ma log pa'i sems dang ldan pa la / bcom ldan 'das khyad par gyi rgyu nyid du ston par mdzad de /* *ibid.* *ctd.*)

Tantric Buddhism is a special instance for only the very highly qualified, but it is not in opposition to the rest of the Mahāyāna, as is stated in introducing the verse which we have already seen cited in Sanskrit sources:

Since this [Mantranaya] has the same goal as the Pāramitānaya, it should be explained what its distinction is:

Although the goal is the same, the Tantric teaching is superior to [the Pāramitānaya] because it is not confused, has many means, is not difficult, and is appropriate for those of keen faculties.

¹⁰ che ba nyid] D: not in P

¹¹ de'i rigs can gyi] conj. ISAACSON: de'i rigs can gyis

Thus, although there is no difference between the two Mahāyānas, that of mantras and that of perfections, with regard to the result, described [already above for example] as nondual omniscience, nevertheless, the *mantramahāyāna* is superior to the *pāramitāmahāyāna* by virtue of those four distinctions.

(*de yang pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa chen po dang don gcig pa las
de'i khyad par gang dag yod pa de brjod par bya'o /
/ don gcig nyid na'ang¹² ma rmongs dang /
/ thabs mang dka' ba¹³ med phyir dang /
/ dbang po rnon po'i dbang byas pas¹⁴ /
/ sngags kyi bstan bcos khyad par 'phags¹⁵ /
/ 'di ltar gnyis su med pa'i rnam pa thams cad mkhyen par bshad
pa'i 'bras bu ni sngags dang pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa chen po
gnyis la khyad par med pa yin mod kyi 'on kyang rab tu dbye ba
rnam pa bzhi po de dag gis¹⁶ pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa chen po
las sngags kyi theg pa chen po khyad par du 'phags pa nyid yin no /
ibid. ctd.)*

Tripiṭaka claims that the goal of the two forms of the Mahāyāna is one and the same. But his famous verse does distinguish (i.e. both differentiate and elevate above) the Mantramahāyāna from the Pāramitāmahāyāna for four reasons, which he goes on to explain in such a way that the Perfection Vehicle is left looking like a highly unreliable form of transport.

Lack of Confusion

Of these, [firstly,] why is the 'lack of confusion'?

The wise [and] greatly compassionate [one] considers, [and] seizes upon the best of means. Spurning inferior (lit. natural:

12 na'ng] D: P na

13 dka' ba] D: P dkar ba

14 byas pas] D: P byas bas

15 ekārthatve 'py asaṃmohāt bahūpāyād aduṣkarāt
tīkṣṇendriyādhikārāc ca mantraśāstraṃ viśiṣyate.

16 de dag gis] D: P dag gis

tha-mal-pa, **prākṛta*) means he attains the state of irreversible (**avaivartya*) [enlightenment].

There are Bodhisattvas who practise the perfections and act without any confusion. And these who thus perform [the perfections] of giving etc., by means of the totally pure fruit [of not making a conceptual distinction] in reality (*de-nyid-la*) between [the three spheres of] gift, giver, and recipient, are thus [also] at the level of the perfection of wisdom. If in reality, although not completely confused [with regard to the lack of inherent existence of these spheres], they fall into that class (*rigs*, **gotra*) [of confusion in performing the perfections] and engage in external giving and so on, [then,] because of not having very sharp faculties, they will realise enlightenment [only] after a long time. But those who do [their] practice with mantras do not suffer from this confusion. If they want to perfect the perfections, [and] because their faculties are sharp, from the first they undertake the practice in such a way that they perfect giving and so on.

(/ *de la ma rmongs pa*¹⁷ *ni 'di yin te / gang gi phyir /*
mkhas pa snying rje cher ldan pa /
/ dpyad de thabs kyi mchog len cing /
*/ tha mal pa yi*¹⁸ *thabs smad nas /*
*/ mi 'pho ba yi*¹⁹ *gnas thob po /*
/ pha rol tu phyin pa la spyod pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnam ni
shin tu ma rmongs pa la 'jug pa yin te / de yang gang 'di ltar sbyin
pa la sogs pa la 'jug pa ni / de nyid la sbyin par bya ba dang / sbyin
pa po dang / len pa po'i 'bras bu rnam par dag pa'i sgo nas shes rab
*kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la gnas par 'gyur ro / / de nyid kyis na*²⁰
'di ni shin tu ma rmongs su zin kyang de'i rigs su lhung bas phyi'i
*sbyin pa la sogs pa la rab tu 'jug cing / shin tu dbang po rno ba*²¹
ma yin pas yun ring pos byang chub mngon par rtogs par 'gyur ro /
/ gsang sngags kyi sgo'i spyad pa spyod pa rnam la ni rmongs pa 'di

17 *ma rmongs pa*] P: D *rmongs pa*

18 *tha mal pa yi*] D: P *tha mal pa'i*

19 *mi 'pho ba yi*] D: P *mi 'pho ba'i*

20 *de nyid kyis na*] D: P *de nyid kyis ni*

21 *rno na*] D: P *rna ba*

*yod pa ma yin te / de pha rol tu phyin pa yongs su rdzogs par 'dod
pa na dbang po rnon po nyid yin pa'i phyir dang po kho nar 'di ltar
rnam par dpyod pa la 'jug ste / ji ltar na sbyin pa la sogs pa yongs
su rdzogs par 'gyur / ibid. ctd.)*

This passage begins to explain what risk of confusion and hence failure lurks in the Pāramitānaya. In the verse a distinction is made between excellent means (*upāya*) and inferior means, called natural and referring, as we shall see, to literalistic enactment.

It is fundamental to the Perfection of Wisdom literature that the three spheres (*trimaṇḍala*) of giving must be pure (cf. BHSD s.v. for refs. to *Śatasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* 92.15 and *Śikṣā-samuccaya* 183.11). In order for the giving to be pure it must be done unselfishly (according to EDGERTON in his dictionary, BHSD s.v.), i.e. without any calculation of the currency of merit to be gained thereby. But this is a weaker condition than that which underlies Tripiṭaka's argument. For that is based on the primacy of thought over action, an apologetic all-pervasive in the Mahāyāna and based on the historical Buddha's own teachings. Here one must understand truly that such apparent identities as gift, giver and recipient (the three spheres) are illusory, the result of unenlightened dichotomising, or projecting an inherent existence onto anything. This is the strong sense of giving unselfishly or selflessly.

We find the same point made in the *Tattvasiddhi*. This treatise offers a fascinating in-depth apologetic for physical relations and sensuality in general. Unfortunately constraints of time and space have prevented me from entering into the many arguments of that text here (but cf. for one of them my 'Tantric Buddhism and Aesthetics: Art and Morality,' ONIANS forthcoming).

Near the beginning of that text the author is striving to demonstrate that objects of the senses are not *per se* causes of passion and hence of endless reincarnation. He says that:

these same [sense objects] do not become causes of the bondage

of transmigration, thanks to a qualified superimposition and a likewise [qualified] transformation. [This is so] (*iti*) because of the [comparable] non-perception of the [distinctions between] gift, giver and recipient when [those] three spheres are purified [of the false superimposition of a distinct existence (*svabhāva*)].

(*na ca ete 'pi viśiṣṭasamāropāt*²² *tathāpariṇāmāc ca saṃsārabandhabhetukā bhavanti iti trimāṇḍalapariśuddhatvād deydāyaka-parigrāhakāpratilabdheḥ*; TaSi p.3)

For the author of the *Tattvasiddhi*, even giving, one of the perfections, can be used as an analogy for the danger of engaging with even the most erotic components of the sensual life. Both are innocuous provided they are purified of the illusory distinctions between the three spheres of an action.

However, here, with Tripiṭaka the logic seems to be pushed one stage further, so that it is actually a mistake to 'engage in external giving' (*phyi'i sbyin*, **bāhyadāna*). This intellectual error of confounding the material with the ideal is one aspect of the confusion of Bodhisattvas in the Perfection carriage of the Mahāyāna. Another is the practical ramifications of that same confusion as the text goes on to detail:

If [you] say that [the perfection of giving] is giving up [one's] head, foot, hand etc., that is wrong. [For,] giving and so on are called perfections in as much as they are perfect, and perfection is realising all at once the wishes of all, and that is itself the fruit of *samādhi*. It is impossible fully to care (*gso ba*) for limitless sentient beings by [giving up one's unique] actual head. Therefore, realising that giving up head and hand and foot is an inferior means, they seek the best of means. And this [best of means, in turn,] is none other than the *samādhi* of wisdom and means. Thus, this practitioner who [practices] by means (*sgor*) of mantras, being keen of faculties, [and] learned in the correct

22 *viśiṣṭasamāropāt* corr.: ed. -samāropāḥ

means, sees countless realms of sentient beings as tormented by the three horrors, however illusory [those beings] actually are.

(*mgo bo dang rkang pa dang / lag pa la sogs pa btang bas so zhe na / 'di ni rigs pa ma yin te / pha rol tu phyin pas sbyin pa la sogs pa pha rol tu phyin pa'i ming 'thob pa yin la / pha rol tu phyin pa*²³ *yang thams cad kyi mngon par 'dod pa cig car yongs su rdzogs par byed pa yin la / de yang ting nge 'dzin gyi 'bras bu nyid yin gyi / phyi rol gyi*²⁴ *mgo bos ni sems can mtha' yas pa yongs su gso bar nus pa ma yin no / / de bas na mgo bo dang lag pa dang rkang pa la sogs pa*²⁵ *sbyin pa tha mal pa'i thabs nyid yin par nges par bzung nas thabs kyi mchog tshol bar byed do / / de yang thabs dang shes rab kyi ting nge 'dzin las gzhan ma yin no / / de bas na gsang sngags kyi sgor spyod pa 'di ni dbang po rnon po yin zhing / phyin ci ma log pa'i thabs la mkhas pas sems can gyi kham mtha' yas pa sgyu ma lta bu'i rang bzhin yin yang sdug bsngal gsum gyis gdungs pa la bstas nas / NaTraPra ibid. ctd.)*

Apparently one cannot be of benefit to all life forms by offering up one's single head. Yet we might object that it should practically be possible, but only after an extremely long time period of time, of many self-sacrifices and rebirths. This is what is implied in Tripiṭaka's previous paragraph where literalistic donors of body parts are said to be capable of attaining enlightenment only after a very long time. Compare the Buddha's physical sacrifices as a Bodhisattva destined for enlightenment: he clearly thought it was worthwhile. In the Mahāyāna a Bodhisattva of the tenth level is enlightened, he has attained *nirvāṇa*, but restrains himself from becoming a fully perfected Buddha. His enlightenment is non-fixed (*apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*, cf. BHSD s.v. for ref. to LÉVI's *Sūtrālamkāra* transl. iii.3 n.4) so that he can continue to toil in the round of *saṃsāra*, being endlessly reborn to act for the sake of all sentient beings.

23 phyin pa] D: P song pa

24 phyi rol gyi] D: P pha rol gyi

25 la sogs pa] D: P la sogs

From this perspective the programme of Tantric Buddhism appears to be highly individualistic, one could say selfish. But Tripiṭaka will argue that Tantric Bodhisattvas can in fact act in such a way as to bring all beings to enlightenment all at once. Tantric Buddhism is thus not only the express lane in as much as one achieves enlightenment in this very life, but is a fast and enormous people carrier, because anyone practising it will inevitably be a Bodhisattva and will therefore be bringing all to enlightenment with him.

The best of means in this passage is the meditative concentration on wisdom and means (**prajñopāyasamādhī*). This *samādhī* is emblematic of what one can call the dematerialisation of means in Buddhism.

Already in the Pāli Canon, the very first pair of verses of the *Dhammapada* proclaim that all human conditions are preceded by mind (*manopubbaṅgamā dhammā*), and that the experience of pleasure or pain, respectively, is contingent on the purity or impurity of one's mind (*manasā pasannena bhāsati vā karoti vā, tato nam sukkham anveti; manasā paduṭṭhena bhāsati vā karoti vā, tato nam dukkham anveti*, Dhṛp vv.1–2). The first two thirds of the first of these verses is quoted in Sanskrit in an important Tantric Buddhist text, the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* of Āryadeva, without the punchline which completes the quote (*manahpūrvāṅgamā dharmā manahśreṣṭhā manojavāḥ*,²⁶ *manasā hi*²⁷ *prasannena bhāṣate vā karoti vā*. CiViPra v.10). Instead, Āryadeva cites the Vinaya story where:

An old man was directed by a slumbering monk to go quickly to a place; because of the rapidity of motion the old fellow had a fall and he died; now apparently the sin of causing death to the old man seems to devolve on the slumbering monk; but as the intention of the monk in ordering the old man to hasten to a particular place was very good, he should not be held morally

26 manojavāḥ] CiViPra.: Dhṛp manomayā

27 hi] CiViPra: Dhṛp ce

responsible for the death of the old man and thus he commits no sin. The authority of the *Vinaya* is also referred to here which holds that unintentional causing of death is no sin on the part of a man possessing no wicked mind. (CiViPra vv.11–13, summary transl. DASGUPTA 1950:199)

The *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* is an important text for the question of general Tantric Buddhist apologetics, but like the *Tattvasiddhi* we will have no further opportunity to discuss it here. The two texts form the main sources for DASGUPTA's chapter 'The argument of the Tantric Buddhists in defence of their yoga' (1950:197–217).

Tripiṭaka goes on to clarify how the doctrine of the three bodies (*trikāya*) facilitates perfect fulfilment of the needs of all sentient beings through the perfection of giving. His implication is that this is misunderstood in standard Mahāyāna practice:

Those who are in the variety of conditions where reality is obscured by their innate ignorance, generate patience [and] they uncover reality. In order to clear away the darkness of ignorance, they meditate on the favour of countless kinds of beings which are, [as it were magically,] created (*sprul pa*, **nirmita*) by ignorance [and so they] generate great compassion. Because [this compassion] has an infinity of objects, the nondual *samādhi* of wisdom and means is perfected. Thus, by force of mental cultivation in every direction and without interruption, all obscuration is gradually destroyed, [and] one attains the totally pure Dharma realm (*suviśuddhadharmadhātu*). Then, in accordance with the application of one's previous vow (*praṇidhāna*), whose nature is to be king of the wish-fulfilling jewel (*cintāmaṇi*), one applies oneself to the end desired of endless realms of sentient beings, by the flow [of] assemblies of emanations. In this situation, if one gives all to all with great compassion, for as long as an auspicious aeon (*bhadrakalpa*), without going outside time, the perfection of giving is perfected. But the inferior giving of [one's actual]

body and the other [inferior practices] do not have this characteristic, and so are not posited as perfections.

(*ma rig pa de nyid kyis de kho na nyid*²⁸ *g.yogs pa'i gar gyi rnam par dgod pa sna tshogs par gnas pa dag gis*²⁹ *phyir mi bzod pa bskyed nas*³⁰ *de kho na nyid rnam par 'byed cing / ma rig pa'i rab rib rnam par bsal bar bya ba'i phyir / ma rig pas sprul pa'i 'gro ba'i dbye ba mtha' yas pa mngon par gdon pa'i bsam pas snying rje chen po mngon sum du byed cing / yul mtha' yas pa nyid kyis thabs dang shes rab gnyis su med pa'i ting nge 'dzin rab tu rtogs pa yin no / / de ltar phyogs chad pa med pa dang rgyun mi 'chad par goms pa'i stobs kyis rim gyis sgrib pa thams cad yongs su zad de shin tu rnam par dag pa'i chos kyi dbyings thob nas / yid bzhin gyi nor bu'i rgyal po'i bdag nyid can smon lam gyi rab tu sbyor ba ji lta bas sems can gyi kham mtha' yas pa rnams sprul pa'i tshogs rab 'byams gyis mngon par 'dod pa'i don la sbyor bar 'gyur ro / / gnas skabs der ni snying rje chen pos thams cad la thams cad dus las ma 'das par bskal ba*³¹ *bzang po nyid du ster bar 'gyur bas na sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa yongs su rdzogs par 'gyur ro / / tha mal ba'i*³² *lus sbyin pa la sogs pa la ni mtshan nyid de yod pa ma yin pas pha rol tu phyin par mi gzhaq go / NaTraPra ibid. ctd.)*

The perfection of giving can only be perfected when the agent of giving emanates himself in countless forms which are tailored by analogy to the innumerable sentient beings which are themselves nothing but emanations, without independent concrete existence. The same is true for the remaining perfections of the root list of six, namely morality, patience or forbearance, heroic energy, concentration and, as the *summum bonum*, wisdom:

Likewise, the perfection of ethical behaviour (*śīla*) is perfected, by perfecting the pure morality of acting for the benefit of sentient beings, and so on. By assemblies of emanations, indeed,

28 nyid] D: P nyid kyis

29 dag gis] D: P dag gi

30 bskyed nas] D: P skyes nas

31 bskal ba] P: D skal ba

32 tha mal ba'i] D: P tha ma'i

acting purely for the benefit of all sentient beings, one has the patience (*kṣānti*) [to suffer] the torments caused by another; [this] is the perfection of forbearance. And [as for] heroic vigour (*vīrya*): when one fulfills all needs, [and] achieves simultaneously all needs and mental desires, the perfection of *vīrya* is perfected. Meditation (*dhyāna*) becomes a perfection when one has attained the *samādhi* of the level[s] of all [the four] *dhyāna* (**sarvādhyānāvasthāsamādhi*). The perfecting of the perfection of wisdom [is what] makes these [others] perfections, [and] thus the perfections are perfected. And the other qualities [of the Pāramitāmahāyāna], means and [the ten] powers (*bala*), the [previous Bodhisattva] vow (*praṇidhāna*), and knowledge (*jñāna*) and so forth, these are perfected [by] the perfection of wisdom. This is the lack of confusion of practising the *mantracaryā* as opposed to *pāramitāyoga*.

(/ de nyid ni sems can gyi don bya ba'i yang dag pa'i tshul khrims la
sogs pa yongs su rdzogs par byed pa yin pas / tshul khrims kyi pha rol
tu phyin pa yongs su rdzogs pa yin no / sprul pa'i tshogs kyi kyang
srog chags thams cad la yang dag par phan 'dags³³ shing gzhan gyi
gnod pa byas pa bzod par gyur pa ni bzod pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa'o
/ / brtson 'grus kyang de'i tshe gang gis don thams cad grub cing dgos
pa³⁴ thams cad dang yid la 'dod pa rnams cig car 'thob par gyur pa
de ni de'i brtson 'grus kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yongs su rdzogs par
gyur pa yin no / / bsam gtan yang de'i tshe bsam gtan thams cad kyi
gnas kyi ting nge 'dzin thob pas pha rol tu phyin pa thob pa yin no
/ / shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa nyid kyang 'di yongs su rdzogs pa
'di dag pha rol tu phyin par rnam par gzhas pa yin te / de ltar na
pha rol tu phyin pa yongs su rdzogs pa yin no / / gang yang de las
gzhan pa thabs dang / stobs dang / smon lam dang / ye shes la sog
pa'i yon tan de rnams ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa nyid yongs
su rdzogs par gyur pa yin te / 'di ni pha rol tu phyin pa'i rnal 'byor
pa las gsang sngags kyi sgo la spyad pa spyod pa rnams ma rmongs
pa yin no / ibid. ctd.)

33 phan 'dags] D: P phan 'dogs

34 dgos pa] D: P gos pa

The main argument is that the perfections of the Mahāyāna are not such unless stamped with the seal of the Perfection of Wisdom. When provided with wisdom there should be no confusion. Unless the idealist ontology is superimposed on the realist ethic, action is in vain. In the end, only understanding this ontology really counts. Tantric practice includes this understanding, while the practice of the perfections does not.

One might say that Tripiṭaka is being more Mahāyānist than Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas. He calculates that in their confusion they are incapable of properly fulfilling the vow to save all sentient beings through the overly literalistic enactment of good deeds which have the unintended consequence of precluding further activity due to the innate limitations of an individual body and one life. According to him, it is only Tantric Buddhism which makes correct use of the categories of reality, whereby one should be active from an Enjoyment (*sambhoga*) Body base, able thence to emanate the multitude of mundanely embodied characters required to fulfil the needs of the multitude of those to be saved.

This is one essential difference between the Mantranaya and the Mahāyāna and the rest of Buddhism (as we saw above p.65ff.). For in Mahāyāna Buddhism one finds an ontology and metaphysics rolled up into one, a one which provides people with the 'mysticism' they find in this tradition. The idea appears close to that of the *tathāgatagarbha* tradition. The mysticism of the Mantranaya is that one is, and one must know one is, identical with the ultimate reality.

A practitioner of the Mantranaya is to achieve identification with the Dharmakāya, the highest of the three Buddha bodies, also known as the *vajrasattva*. From there he is simultaneously also identical with the Saṃbhogakāya, and it is from there that he is manifest in the conventional world, in a Nirmāṇakāya, or Emanation Body. These identifications are real, so that the prac-

tioner *is* a Buddha. They are to be realised, i.e. the identification must both be ‘made real’, but also ‘understood to be already real’.

This is prefigured in the *tathāgatagarbha* theory, the idea that all beings contain as their essence (*-garbha*) a/the Buddha-nature (cf. WILLIAMS 1989:96–105). The parallelism highlights what Paul WILLIAMS described, with reference to the *tathāgatagarbha*, as the ‘tension between innate, inherent enlightenment and becoming enlightened’ (1989:97). In the *Hevajratantra* we find:

[All] beings are Buddhas, but are obscured by adventitious defilement. When that [defilement] is removed, [all] beings are Buddhas. This is certain.

(*sattvā buddhā eva kin tu āgantukamalāvṛtāḥ*
tasyāpakaṣaṇāt sattvā buddhā eva na saṁśayaḥ. HT II.iv.69)

The first half of this verse probably refers back to that of Dharmakīrti (*prabhāsvarām idam cittam prakṛtyāgantavo malāḥ*. *Pramāṇavārttika*, *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter, v.208ab; FRANCO 1997:85), if not directly to the almost identical canonical Pāli (*prabhasaram idam bhikkhave cittam. tam ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭham* AN i.10; FRANCO *ibid.*)

Tripiṭaka’s exegesis of the ‘lack of confusion’ is complete. Next a verse introduces the explanation of the Mantranaya’s multiplicity of means (*bahūpāya*):

Multiplicity of Means

In order to well accomplish the ends of all sentient beings, the teacher of the world taught the one with a great mind (or: *Mahāmati) that the best *naya* has four features [and] all means. In all other Ways (*naya*) the Lord taught asceticism (*dka’ thub*, *tapas*), rules of restraint (*sdom pa*, *saṁvara*), vows of austerity (*brtul zhugs*, *vrata*) and so on as the means to attain heaven (*mtho ris*, *svarga*) and liberation (*thar pa*, *mokṣa*). [But] not all beings are capable of practising asceticism, restraint etc., because some are overpowered by those, since they practise peaceful rites.

Therefore, not all sentient beings are served by these ['violently' ascetic means]. And the Mantramahāyāna is taught in order to yoke all sentient beings to the path of virtue (*dge bai' lam*, **kuśalapatha*), thus its multiplicity of means.

(/ *sems can kun don legs bsgrub phyir* /
 / *blo chen la ni thabs thams cad* /
 / *dbye ba rnam bzhir tshul gyi mchog* /
 / *'gro ba'i ston pas gsungs pa yin* /
 / *tshul gzhan*³⁵ *thams cad du ni bcom ldan 'das kyis dga' thub dang*
 / *sdom pa dang* / *brtul zhugs la sogs pa mtho ris dang thar pa thob*
pa'i thabs nyid yin par gsungs la / *sems can thams cad dka' 'thub*
dang sdom pa la sogs pa spyod par nus pa ma yin te / *la la ni shin*
tu zhi ba'i las la spyod pa yod pas de'i dbang du mdzad pa yin pa'i
phyir ro / / *de lta bas na des ni sems can thams cad rje su 'dzin par*
nus pa ma yin no / / *yang gsang sngags kyis theg pa chen po ni sems*
can thams cad dge ba'i lam la sbyor ba'i phyir gsungs te / *de bas na*
thabs sna tshogs pa yin no / *ibid. ctd.*)

Tripiṭaka begins by characterising other religious methods as rigorous disciplines. One might assume that his tacit claim is that austerities do not bring one to enlightenment. This is no more than what the historical Buddha himself discovered (cf. above p.39f.). Tripiṭaka seems to be referring to non-Buddhists, since the fruits on offer are heaven and liberation (*mokṣa*), not the Buddhist enlightenment (*bodhi* or *nirvāṇa*). But he must also be charging non-Tantric forms of Buddhism with monotonous harshness, 'In *all* other Ways the Lord...' That accusation is a recurrent theme in other Tantric Buddhist authors, as we will see (cf. below p.260 and p.296ff.).

Tripiṭaka will go on to detail how Tantric Buddhism is the only teaching which can cater for all tastes, including the violent. The multiplicity of means will be detailed as a bespoke system which can be tailored according to one's predominant affliction

35 [tshul gzhan] D: P tshul gzhin

(*kleśa*). In this regard, I have yet to find a text where consideration is given to the most realistic probability of one candidate having a proportion of various *kleśas*: half passion (*rāga*), a quarter delusion (*moha*), another quarter hatred (*dveṣa*), and so on. The assumption must be that it is the predominance of one *kleśa* in particular which binds one to the unenlightened state. Perhaps the long-term prognosis entails dealing with the less prevalent *kleśas* each in turn, after the eradication of the preponderant one. In general, an interesting comparison might be made between the theory of the *kleśas* and the European system of classifying men's natures according to the physical humours, but this is not the place to consider such parallels (cf. also the 'seven kinds of noble persons' in the *Visuddhimagga*, ÑĀṆAMOḲI 1956:682–683).

Tripitaka has claimed that Tantric Buddhism alone can cater to the variety of tastes, or rather unhealthy prejudices and proclivities (*kleśa*), of men; he goes on to detail how the specialised catering is assessed and then executed:

The divisions of the [Mantranaya's] means are: first of all, the yogin of the Secret way (*gsang ba'i tshul, guhyanaya*) should ascertain his own nature, either by himself or through his teacher. Desiring to be favoured in accordance with the ascertainment [of his nature], he should ascertain the correct teaching thanks to [his] teacher. Then, by practising the rite of investigating in a dream, or throwing and letting fall a flower, or rituals such as the binding of a *mudrā*, one marks (*nye bar mtshon pa, *upalakṣaṇa*) [and] should know to which of the [main] defilements (*kleśa*), passion (*rāga*) and so on, and secondary defilements (*upakleśa*), one is especially inclined (*kun tu spyod pa*).

(/ *de la thabs kyi dbye ba ni 'di yin te / 'di na thog ma kho nar gsang ba'i tshul gyi rnal 'byor pas rang gi rang bzhin rang nyid kyi sam de'i bla mas nges par gzung bar bya'o / / nges par gzung ba*³⁶ *yang rjes su phan gdags pa 'dzin par 'dod pas bla mas phyin ci ma log par*

36 *gzung ba*] D: P *bzung ba*

*bstan pa'i nges pa gzung la / rmi lam du so sor mthong ba'i sgo nas
bya ba'am me tog babs pa dang / dbab pa'am / phyag rgya bcing ba
la sogs pa las sam / spyod pa las nye bar mtshon nas 'dod chags la
sogs pa'i nyon mongs pa dang / nye ba'i nyon mongs pa gang la lhag
par kun du spyod pa yin par shes par bya'o / ibid. ctd.)*

At the very outset of Tantric practice one performs one of a large variety of divinations to discover what one's particular affliction may be (cf. for parallel Indian accounts: SANDERSON 1994:88–89). Tantric practice is here called the Secret way (*gsang ba'i tshul*). From the Tibetan alone that could look like an ellipsis of Mantranaya, since the general term the Tibetans use for *mantra* is anyway 'secret *mantra*' (*gsang sngags*). But the Sanskrit original could equally have been **guhyanaya*, and it would be the esoteric nature of the path which is being emphasised, at this point when the text enters into actual ritual, the preliminary rites of entry into an exclusive community. Moreover, the Sanskrit compound *guhyanaya* could also refer to 'the way to the secret', the highest truth or mystery. Following the Indian cultural tradition, such important names are given a variety of glosses, even by a single commentator in a single passage.

Tripiṭaka talks not only about the *kleśas*, but also about subsidiary *kleśas*, implying a subtler analysis of a defiled person's constitution, somewhat in tune with my earlier conjecture that there might have been (but is not known) a more complex recipe of which blend of defilements are present in an individual. But the following shows that it is the predominant problem which counts, and the metaphor of dominance is articulated in the references to the 'lord' of one's Buddha family:

Thus one ascertains [who is] the lord of one's [Buddha] family (*kula*). Then, the *mantrin* whose practice is passion (*rāga*), [for example], generates the thought of great compassion towards all sentient beings, in accordance with his [previous Bo-dhisattva] vow, and visualises himself, in accordance with his

own mind, as the Tathāgata Amitābha whose nature is the indivisible state of passion (*rāgavajra*). He should do proper worship with the instrumental means (*yo byad*; **upakaraṇa*) of worship, which [instrumental means] are taught in the tantras to be mere appearance (*mig yor tsam*; **pratibhāsamātra*), and should bear in mind (**anusmaraṇa*) his *mantra* and *mudrā*, and enter into the *samādhi* called ‘The way of great passion which has as its nature infinite joy’ (**anantānandasvabhāvamahārāganaya*). [Finally,] the [practitioner,] whose essence is joy pervaded by great compassion, abandons all dichotomising mental constructs (*rtog pa*; *kalpanā*).

(/ *de ltar rang gi rigs kyi bdag po yang dag par nges par byas nas 'dod chags la spyod pa'i sngags pas smon lam dang rjes su mthun par sems can thams cad la snying rje chen po'i sems bskyed nas bdag nyid kyi yid dang rjes su mthun par 'dod chags rdo rje'i ngo bo nyid de bzhin gshegs pa 'od dpag med du bsam te / rgyud las bshad pa'i mig yor tsam gyi bdag nyid can gyi mchod pa'i yo byad rnams kyis yang dag par mchod la / rang gi sngags dang phyag rgya rjes su dran te / mtha' yas pa kun du dga' ba'i bdag nyid can 'dod chags chen po'i tshul zhe bya ba'i ting nge 'dzin la snyoms par zhugs la*³⁷ / *de yang snying rje chen pos khyab pa'i dga' ba'i*³⁸ *bdag nyid can rtog pa*³⁹ *thams cad nye bar spangs pa yin no / ibid. ctd.*)

This paragraph summarises progress in Tantric practice as prescribed for a particular type of Tantric practitioner (*mantrin*), one dominated by passion. The form depends on first identifying one's leading Buddha and then identifying with him. Next, as—here—Amitābha, one performs ritual and mental cultivation, culminating in the attainment of a meditation (*samādhi*). That *samādhi*, from its name, appears to be the transformation of the defilement passion into great passion (*mahārāga*). Great passion is in turn nothing but great bliss, the as-it-were angelic brother

37 zhugs la] D: P zhugs

38 khyab pa'i dga' ba'i] D: P khyab pa'i

39 rtog pa] D: P rtogs pa

of his reflex, the devil, passion. The process described is almost identical, *mutatis mutandis*, for those dominated by either of the two other root defilements:

In the same way, the *mantrin* whose practice is hatred (*dveṣa*), and [the *mantrin*] whose practice is delusion (*moha*), generate the thought of great compassion [towards all sentient beings,] in accordance with [their previous Bodhisattva] vow, and generate [themselves as, respectively,] the Tathāgata Akṣobhya whose nature is the *vajra* of *dveṣa*, or the Lord Vairocana whose nature is the *vajra* of *moha*, in accordance with [their] own mind. Then [they] should do worship with the instrumental means of worship which is taught in the tantras to be mere appearance. They should bear in mind (**anusmr*) [their] own *mantra* and *mudrā*, and apply themselves to, inter alia, the entry (*snyoms par zhugs*, **samāpanna*)⁴⁰ into the *samādhi* of ‘The way of that which has endless hatred as its nature’ (**anantadveṣasvabhāva*), or, [respectively,] ‘[The way of that which has endless delusion [as its nature]]’ (**anantamoha[svabhāva]*). As for [the defilements] doubt (*saṃśaya*) and pride (*māna*), they are not taught separately, since they are essentially [the same as] *moha* and *dveṣa*.

(/ de bzhin du zhe sdang la spyod pa dang / gti mug la spyod pa'i
sngags pas smon lam dang rjes su mthun pa'i snying rje chen po'i
sems bskyed la / bdag nyid kyi yid dang rjes su mthun pa'i⁴¹ zhe
sdang rdo rje'i ngo bo nyid de bzhin gshegs pa mi bskyod pa'am/ gti
mug rdo rje'i ngo bo nyid bcom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad
du bsgoms la rgyud las bshad pa'i mig yor⁴² tsam gyi bdag nyid can
gyi mchod pa'i yo byad rnams kyis mchod do / rang gi sngags dang
phyag rgya yang rjes su dran la / mtha' yas pa'i zhe sdang gi⁴³ bdag
nyid can nam mtha' yas pa'i gti mug gi tshul gyi⁴⁴ ting nge 'dzin
la⁴⁵ snyoms par zhugs la zhes bya ba la sogs par sbyar bar bya'o / /

40 *snyoms par zhugs* (**samāpanna*), for *snyoms par 'jug*, (*samāpatti*)?

41 mthun pa'i] D: P mthun pa

42 mig yor] D: P mig g.yor

43 zhe sdang gi] D: P zhe sdang gis

44 tshul gyi] P: D tshul gyis

45 ting nge 'dzin la] D: P ti nge 'dzin la

the tshom dang nga rgyal dag ni la lar tha mi dad par bshad de /
de dag ni gti mug dang zhe sdang gi bdag nyid can yin pa'i phyir ro
 / *ibid. ctd. – D 18v2, P 19b6)*

Those afflicted by different *kleśas* are to do their practice identifying with different Buddhas. Two minor *kleśas* are simply collapsed into the corresponding two of the major three, thus curtailing the need for a great multiplicity of means. Tripiṭaka goes on to discuss the means of Tantric practice *in extenso*, a topic which would lead us away from his root verse and its naming of four features by which Tantric practice is distinguished (in both senses of this word). We shall reenter his text at the point where he comes to the alleged lack of difficulty (*aduṣkara*) in Tantric Buddhism.

Lack of Difficulty

The Sage (*thub-pa, muni*), [the Buddha,] taught [as] the ultimate truth (*dam-pa'i don, paramārtha*) that the desired end (*'dod-pa'i don, *iṣṭārtha*) is attained by applying oneself to whatever one desires whenever and in whatever way.

This is the great (*lhag-pa, *adhika*) superiority of the Mantramahāyāna. A sentient being attains enlightenment (*bodhi*) by bliss itself, which is the method, applying himself to whatever object he truly desires whenever and in whatever way. That is why it has been taught:

'Whatever terrible deed (*raudrakarma*) [normally] binds beings [in *samsāra*], can itself [for some] be the means (*sopāya*) to release from the bond of rebirth.' (HT II.ii.50)

So, by teaching means which are appropriate in that way, the Lord did not teach a difficult practice in the Mantramahāyāna.

(/ gang zhig gang du ji ltar 'dod /
/ de nyid de la nges sbyor zhing /
/ 'dod pa'i don ni thob mdzad pa'i /
/ dam pa'i don ni thub pas gsungs /
/ 'di ni gsang sngags kyi theg pa chen po'i lhag pa'i khyad par yin te

/ sems can gang yul gang du'am dus gang du ji ltar mngon par 'dod
 par 'gyur pa de de nyid la nges par sbyor zhing thabs bde ba nyid
 kyis byang chub thob par mdzad pa yin no // de bas na /
 / skye bo mi bzad pa yi⁴⁶ las /
 / gang dang gang gis bcings gyur ba⁴⁷ /
 / thabs dang bcas pa⁴⁸ de nyid kyis /
 / srid pa'i 'ching ba las grol 'gyur / (HT II.ii.50)
 / zhes gsungs pa yin no // de ltar rjes su mthun pa'i thabs ston par
 mdzad pas na / gsang sngags kyi theg pa chen por ni / bcom ldan 'das
 dka' ba⁴⁹ spyod pa ston par mi mdzad pa yin la / ibid. D 22r1ff.,
 P 23b1ff.)

Tripiṭaka introduces his new section with a verse which premises his argument on a teaching of the historical Buddha himself: the highest truth (*paramārtha*) is that desired ends (**iṣṭārtha*) are easily obtained, with a probable pun on two senses of the Sanskrit *artha* (*don*). It is quite strong to call this facility of fulfilment the highest truth. Yet it is true that one can imagine the Buddha assuring his followers that if they desire something, preferably enlightenment, nothing is impossible. We considered in the Introduction how it is legitimate to desire an end to suffering before one can bring it about and thus be liberated from desires which are otherwise by nature insatiable (cf. above p.54ff.).

But Tripiṭaka goes on to expand on his verse with an apparently hedonistic claim that one should indulge every desire and then, being blissful, one will be enlightened, a claim which, moreover, he privileges as 'the great superiority' of the Mantranaya. I should briefly clarify here what I mean by equating Tripiṭaka's position with what we know as hedonism, for there are a variety of beliefs which come under that header in the European tradition. A synopsis of Western positions is of value here for the sake of

46 bdzad pa yi] D: P bdzad pa'i

47 bcings gyur ba] D, P: HT 'ching 'gyur ba

48 thabs dang bcas pa] D, P: HT thabs dang bcas na

49 dka' ba] D: P dka' bar

comparison and, furthermore, because they are likely to have influenced or correspond to my own given modes of thought and those of a Western readership.

In the ancient Greek Mediterranean world many schools of philosophy claimed that the good, or the good life, is one and the same as pleasure (Gk. *ēdonē*). The following is a summary of the already brief entry for *hedonism, ancient* in the recent *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (C.C.W. TAYLOR in HONDERICH 1995:337–339). Thus, amongst the pre-Socratics, Democritus advocated what has been called ‘enlightened’ hedonism: that the choice of pleasures should be made according to whether they contribute to an overall tranquillity (Gk. *euthumia*, lit. good humour) in life. Aristippus, on the other hand, asserted that it is the pleasure of the moment which is the supreme good.

In the *Gorgias* Plato has Socrates differentiate between good pleasures and damaging ones, while by the time he himself wrote the *Republic* it is rationality which is the good, and therefore pleasant. Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, does argue that pleasure is good, but more importantly, he strives to define what pleasure is in terms of the actualization of a person’s natural potential. He was followed by the Cyrenaics who maintained that it is the pleasure of the moment, and rather bodily than mental pleasures, which are the supreme good. Against them was Epicurus who drew the distinction between the pleasure of correcting a deficiency in one’s condition and the higher end of being in a trouble-free state.

Of these possibly hubristic simplifications it seems *prima facie* that Aristippus’s pleasure of the moment is the closest match for what we find in Tripiṭaka’s amplification of his verse. But that does not take into account the nature of the happiness resultant from indulging one’s desires, which Tripiṭaka identifies as the sufficient cause or equivalent of enlightenment. We are not yet

in a position to say whether Tripiṭaka's idea of bliss is like that of Aristotle, whether it is physical, intellectual or moral, or whether it corresponds to either of the Epicurean types of pleasure.

If we turn to more modern Western philosophy, three types of hedonism may be distinguished: psychological, evaluative and rationalizing (J.C.B. GOSLING s.v. *hedonism*, in HONDERICH 1995:337). The first is a strong theory of motivation, that activity is inevitably directed towards pleasure, while the second makes a value claim that pleasure should be our object, given that there is the alternative of mistakenly pursuing something else. Similarly, according to rationalizing hedonism, it is pleasure as an end that makes a choice rational. Further distinctions are between whether the pleasure is that of the subject, and so a form of egoism, or that of more than the subject alone, or even of all sentient beings, and thus altruistic and connected to utilitarian positions. Again, one must decide whether one is talking about physical pleasures, or intellectual or moral ones. Returning finally to a hedonist of history, we should note that Claude-Adrien HELVÉTIUS, in the eighteenth century, maintained that since action is motivated by the desire for pleasure, virtue, being beneficial to society, can be encouraged by reward, including sexual gratification (T. PINK s.v. *Helvétius*, in HONDERICH 1995:351).

In assessing Tripiṭaka's assertion in the light of these models, his hedonism is certainly not 'psychological', but does seem to correspond to the 'evaluative' type. Indeed, it would also be 'rationalizing', if enlightenment is, in Buddhist terms, the highest form of rationality. He does not here explicitly refer to the benefit of all sentient beings, but we will shortly see that it is that common good, absolutely common because of the lack of segregation between self and other, which precludes a Bodhisattva seeing difficulty in exercising his altruism.

Thus the indulgence of personal pleasure can be precisely the pleasure of giving someone else pleasure, by acting for their benefit. This idea ties in with current evolutionary theories. How does one explain the origins of virtue, given the elemental biological fact of the selfish gene? There is said to be no such thing as altruism. What looks like altruism can always be reduced to self-interest, or the interest of one's genes. The same paradox obtains in the satirical depiction of the po-faced do-goodery of a charitable Christian intent on salvation.

Nor does Tripiṭaka here distinguish between kinds of pleasure, though the natural sense of his expression would refer to direct physical satisfaction. Yet that assumption of bodily pleasures cannot be extended to apply to erotic pleasure, whereas that will be fundamental to the initiations which we come to study in detail. Nevertheless, HELVÉTIUS' concept of motivating reward has no parallel in Tripiṭaka's argument, nor anywhere, as far as I know, in Tantric Buddhist texts.

Following the sentence we have termed hedonistic, Tripiṭaka quotes a well-known verse from the *Hevajratāntra* expressing the homeopathic potential of what are otherwise capital sins, provided one is equipped with Buddhist means, normally compassion. Thus the defining feature of a dreadful deed's soteriological efficacy should be its altruistic intent. But Tripiṭaka goes on to draw a different conclusion, stated in his famous root verse, that the Tantric branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism is distinguished by being free of difficulties or hardship. He attributes authorship of that way to the Lord, if only in the weak sense that the Buddha has Hevajra and so on, principal authorities in Higher Tantric Buddhism, are 'Lords' in the same way as Śākyamuni was.

The passage continues with an allusion to a fine example of *Prajñāpāramitā* argumentation:

[Even] in the *Perfection of Wisdom* and other [texts], a Bo-

dhisattva perceives no difficulty (*aduṣkarasamjñā*); it is indeed taught thus everywhere. If [you object] that there, it is only a concept (*ming, samjñā*), [‘difficulty’,] which is being denied, then [I would refute you by asking:] is it not the case that in denying the concept the difficulty itself is denied? [Or, to put it another way,] if some activity is perceived as hardship then that [activity] is hardship and not simply an action.

(*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la sogs par ni ci nas kyang dka' ba med pa'i ming dang ldan pa nyid byang chub sems dpa'*⁵⁰ *yin pa de ltar ni thams cad du ston par mdzad pa nyid yin no // der ni ming tsam zhig bkag pa yin no zhe na / ming bkag pa nyid kyi dka' ba nyid bkag par gyur pa ma yin nam / gang zhig byed pa nyid na dka' ba'i ming 'jug pa de nyid ni dka' ba yin gyi bya ba tsam ma yin no / ibid. ctd.)*

The *Perfection of Wisdom* reference can be traced, for instance, to the first chapter of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. There Śāriputra interrogates Subhūti as to how a Bodhisattva, if he is without origin (*anutpāda*), could do the difficult job (*duṣkaracārika*) which is to endure the experience of so many sufferings (*duḥkhāni*) for the sake of sentient beings? (*yadi c' āyusman Subhūte bodhisattvo 'py anutpādaḥ kiṃ bodhisattvo duṣkaracārikaṃ carati yāni vā tāni sattvānāṃ kṛtaśo duḥkhāny utsahate pratyānubhavitum?* AbhSAA p.116) Subhūti's response, eventually to be praised for its superlative slipperiness (*ibid.* p.122), is that a Bodhisattva would be unable to act for the vast world's benefit if he conceived of his practice as a hardship (*na hy āyusman Śāriputra duṣkarasamjñāṃ janayitvā śakyo aprameyānāṃ asaṃkhyeyānāṃ sattvānāṃ arthaḥ kartum. ibid.*). He must think his task a happy one, looking on all as members of his immediate family with unconditional generosity, thinking of them as his own self, indeed (*ibid.* p.117). Just as he desires his own release from the suffering of unenlightened being, he desires the same for everyone, with the conscious precaution that:

50 byang chub sems dpa'] conj. ISAACSON: D, P byang chub pa

I must not entertain any negative feeling towards them, even when I am torn to pieces a hundred times!

(*na ca mayaitesu cittapradoṣa utpādayitavyo 'ntaśaḥ śataśo 'pi chidyamāneneti.* ibid. pp.117-118)

The self-exhortation is followed by the positive of the compound Tripiṭaka cites (*duṣkarasaṃjñī* ibid. p.118; *dka' ba med pa'i ming dang ldan pa, *aduṣkarasaṃjñī*). The following words of Subhūti point out that the concept of 'self' (*ātma* ibid.) is as inapplicable to all that exists as it is to the Bodhisattva's own being, and it is with this understanding that a Bodhisattva acts without any concept of hardship (*saced evaṃ cittaś carīṣyati na duṣkarasaṃjñī carīṣyati, na duṣkarasaṃjñī viharīṣyati.* ibid.). And it is because of this literal selflessness that the Bodhisattva is without origin (*yad apy āyusman Śāriputra evaṃ āha anutpādo Bodhisattva iti, evam etad... anutpādo bodhisattva iti.* ibid. p.119), while at the same time the awareness of that selflessness is what enables him to act selflessly.

I moved from translating as 'difficulty' to 'hardship' the one word *dka' ba* which we know was *duṣkara*, in the Sanskrit original of his verse (*aduṣkarāt*) as well as in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. Etymologically it means '[something] hard to do', which can refer either to a difficulty in the accomplishment of an end or to an ascetic practice of hardship. Both senses are included in Tripiṭaka's discussion of Tantric Buddhism. For him it is both easy to succeed by, because one can— as it were spontaneously— follow one's natural inclinations, and easy to practice, because free of strict regimes of self-denial.

Here, the question is whether 'the Buddha' really meant that Tantric practices are easy, or whether that was just a phrase he used, in a particular context perhaps. Tripiṭaka tests the argument by comparing the different terms people might use with reference to a single phenomenon, as we have already discussed: the standard

Mahāyāna Bodhisattva practice:

A Bodhisattva, cultivating the non-dual *samādhi*, gives up his head, foot, hand and the rest and attains the joy which is known as (*'du shes*, **samjñā*) another's benefit. Thus [that giving] gets the name of bliss, and how can there then be any difficulty? [You] might [object] that in other [sources such practice] is famous for being difficult. If that is [your objection, then the arbitrariness of calling the Bodhisattva practice difficult] is the same as [the way that] in other [sources] the simultaneous accomplishment of the desired ends of beings is renowned for being excessively difficult. [This apparently difficult task is in fact doable] by means of hosts of emanations, [necessary for] the attainment (**samāpatti*) of the highest bliss which has as its single flavour the great compassion which is endowed with all the means (*upakaraṇa*) for bliss. [This is what it is to] engage in mantra practice.

(/ byang chub sems dpa' ni gnyis su med pa'i ting nge 'dzin goms par gyur pas mgo bo dang / rkang pa dang lag pa la sogs pa sbyin pa gzhan gyi don gyi 'du shes kyi dga' ba thob pas bde ba'i ming nyid la 'jug pas de'i tshe ji ltar dka' ba yin / gzhan dag la dka' ba nyid du grags pa yin zhe na / gal te de lta na⁵¹ ni gsang sngags kyi sgo la spyad pa spyod pa bde ba'i yo byad thams cad dang ldan pa'i snying rje chen po ro gcig pa'i mchog tu dga' ba'i snyoms par 'jug pa⁵² sprul pa'i tshogs kyis 'gro ba rnams kyi mngon par 'dod pa'i don rnams cig car byed pa ni gzhan dag la lhag par⁵³ dka' ba nyid du grags pas 'di dag mnyam pa nyid yin no / ibid. ctd.)

Tripitaka says that a Bodhisattva makes sacrifices but, like a Christian martyr, his hardships are rewarded with bliss. Accounts of Christian martyrdoms abound in references to the joy of suffering for the sake of one's faith in the true religion (cf. the martyr

51 de lta na] D: P de ltar na

52 snyoms par 'jug pa]: D, P snyoms par 'jug pa mi 'dod pa rnams. But I have been unable to understand the import of this latter phrase: 'undesirables' (?), or to see a way to improve the Tibetan text.

53 lhag par] D: P lhags par

poems of Prudentius). Physical torment is even described in terms of bodily pleasure: the agony and the ecstasy. The same argument applies to Tantric Buddhism. The bliss of satisfying another's needs far outweighs the trouble taken to do so, and so it would be perverse to refer to such a practice as difficult. Many may say that it is excessively difficult (*lhag par dka' ba*), but they are ignoring its nature which consists in great compassion, bliss, and being of benefit to all. What hardship can there be in these features?

However, this section of his argument is built on the analogy between conventional Mahāyāna practice and that of Tantric Buddhism. In this case, Tripitaka appears to be claiming that the Mantranaya can be called free of difficulties *in the same way* as Bodhisattvas are at ease in the Perfection vehicle, even if they appear to be suffering all manner of hardship. With such an analogy in place, Tripitaka undermines his initial assertion, in the root verse, that Tantric Buddhism is better than the rest of the Mahāyāna because it is free of difficulties. Perhaps we have to let this problem pass, since his statement about Bodhisattva practice may have been made merely for the sake of the analogy, and is not intended to stand alone as a statement of fact. He will go on to restate that it is a matter of choice whether one emphasises the negative or the positive aspects of the whole.

Therefore, doing anything of the slightest benefit to another cannot be said to be a hardship, and so it is not proper that that [thing of benefit] should bear the title 'difficult'. That is why, by denying the name ['hardship'], it is taught that a yogin of reality (*tattva*) who is endowed with great compassion (*karuṇā*) is fulfilled (*phun-sum-tshogs-pa*, **sampanna*). One may classify (*rigs su rtogs pa*) that [practice], according to one's wishes, as [either] difficult or easy to do. Thus, because [in it] one attains bliss through bliss itself, the Lord taught that the Mantramahāyāna has no difficult practice.

(/ *de bas na dka' ba ni 'dir rnam pa thams cad du gzhan gyi don*

*gang cung zad la sbyar bar bshad pa ma yin la / de yang dka' ba'i
 ming can du rigs pa ma yin no / / de bas na ming bkag pas thugs
 rje chen po dang ldan pa'i de kho na nyid kyi rnal 'byor pa nyid
 kyi phun sum tshogs pa yin par bstan pa yin no / / de la dka' bar⁵⁴
 byed pa'am sla bar byed pa ni rigs su rtogs pa⁵⁵ ci 'dod par spyod
 pa nyid do / / de bas na bde ba nyid kyis bde ba thob par bya ba'i
 phyir / bcom ldan 'das gsang sngags kyi theg pa chen por ni dka' ba
 mi spyod pa ston par⁵⁶ mdzad ba yin no / ibid. ctd.)*

Difficulty is in the eye of the beholder, and is a question of vocabulary. Since we are talking about a religion built on monism, or the futility of distinguishing between good and bad, it should make no difference what words one uses to describe a truly amorphous whole. And yet, Tripiṭaka does make the positive claim that it is the Mantranaya which is free of difficulty, and that its ease is peculiar to its engagement with what each person's instincts are, and their pleasurable fulfilment. In contrast, the lesson of the passage of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* discussed above, was that one could not hope to succeed as a Bodhisattva if one did consider the commitment an onerous one, for one would not be able to sustain enthusiasm in the face of seemingly endless personal suffering.

The final sentence is a further statement of what we have above termed the religion's hedonism: 'because [in it] one attains bliss through bliss itself' (*bde ba nyid kyis bde ba thob par bya ba'i phyir*, **sukhenaiva sukhaprāpteḥ*). But 'through bliss' is in Sanskrit synonymous with 'easily'. This may be the translation truest to the original, so that the hedonism here advocated is of the less than ecstatic, but rather trouble-free kind. One is unperturbed because the system is complex enough to be able to anticipate and compensate for one's particular weaknesses, which must finally be eradicated, even if that only means realising their metaphysical

54 dka' bar] D: P dka' ba

55 rtogs pa] P: D gtogs pa

56 ston par] P: D stan par

relativity.

Four Divisions of Practitioners

Thus the text next presents an elaborate system of different kinds of consort, four in total. These are arranged in a descending order, from *mahāmudrā*, to *jñānamudrā*, to *amayamudrā* and finally, the lowest, *karmamudrā*. Each is literally more tangible than the one before. This order is in accordance with the keenness of one's faculties. But the relevant practitioners have already been restricted to those of the keenest faculties, since Tantric Buddhism is also distinguished in Tripiṭaka's root verse as being appropriate for precisely those members of the intellectual elite. So there are keener, less keen, and least keen subdivisions of the group of those with keen faculties.

We will return to the structure presented here of a progressive corporealisation of the female consort for those of lesser abilities when we come to consider the tradition's many arguments for and against intercourse with a real woman (cf. Part II below). For Tripiṭaka's position is by no means the standard one.

In this passage the point is that the Mantranaya is an easy way because it is not uniform. Recognizing the varieties of type, even among the chosen few, it offers a range of consorts, so that everyone will have the sacramental relationship appropriate to his intellectual status.

Here [in the Mantramahāyāna, there are] thus great souled ones (*bdag nyid chen po, mahātma*) who are the best of those with the best faculties. [They] do not engage in masses of failings (*doṣa*) such as passion and so on. [They] do not know [deluded] conceptualisation which is *per se* (*rang bzhin nyid kyis*) gross. Greatly compassionate, [they] strive in the search for the nondual truth. [These best of those with the best faculties] are given the best of all secrets, the *mahāmudrā*, which is also known as 'means and wisdom'. [This *mahāmudrā*] is the elimination

without remainder of the failing (*doṣa*) of elaborating (*prapañca*) actions into being inner or outer. [Its] wisdom is that all *dharma*s are without a self; [and its means is that] it consists in nothing but (*-*ekarasa*) great compassion.

(/ de yang 'di ltar gang 'dod chags la sogs pa'i nyes pa'i tshogs rnam
la kun du spyod pa med pa rang bzhin nyid kyis rags pa'i rnam par
rtog pa mngon par mi shes pa / snying rje chen po dang ldan pa /
gnyis su med pa'i de kho na nyid tshol ba la brtson pa dbang po rab
kyi yang rab tu gyur ba'i bdag nyid chen po de'i phyir phyi dang
nang gi bdag nyid can gyi bya ba'i spros pa'i nyes pa ma lus pa spangs
pa / snying rje chen po'i ro gcig pa / chos thams cad bdag med pa'i
ye shes kyi ngo bo nyid ming gzhan thabs dang shes rab ces bya ba'i
phyag rgya chen po gsang ba thams cad kyi dam pa nye bar bstan
par mdzad pa yin no / ibid. ctd.)

According to Tripiṭaka, the *crème de la crème* have no truck with the afflictions, beginning with passion. Nor are they deluded into seeing a distinction between subject and object, or, more to the point, between actual (outer) and visualised (inner) activity. Hence they can avail themselves of the Seal (*mudrā*, *phyag rgya*) who is a Consort only in the most metaphorical sense. The *mahā-mudrā* is an abstraction of wisdom and means. Nothing like a woman, real or imagined, it is rather the union itself of the pair: male, means, and the female, wisdom.

Next [there are those] who are the average of [those with] the best faculties. Although [they] have turned their backs on the enjoyment of common objects [of the senses], [they] have not abandoned the dichotomising conceptualisation which is the latent impression (*vāsanā*) of passion and [the other *kleśas*]. [Hence they] proliferate (*sprul pa*, **prapañca*) as a plurality knowledges (*jñāna*) which are [false] conceptualisations. [They] are incapable of entering into the great ocean of knowledge (*jñāna*) of the ultimate truth. For these people a Knowledge Seal [Consort] (*jñānamudrā*) is taught, to be [their] means of realising the *mahā-mudrā*. [For she] has as her nature the 'knowledge' (*jñāna*) that

causes to emanate assemblies of consorts (*vidyā*, lit. knowledge) of the Tathāgatas. [She] is wisdom incarnate, [and] the method (*upāya*) which is the accumulation of what is necessary (*dgos pa*, **prajojana*) for wisdom: garland, clothes, ornaments and so on.’

(/ gang yang tha mal pa'i yul la nye bar longs spyod pa la rgyab kyis phyogs kyang 'dod chags la sogs pa'i bag chags kyi rnam par rtog pa ma spangs pa rnam par rtog pa'i ye shes sna tshogs par sprul pa / dbang po mchog gi bar mar⁵⁷ gyur pa / don dam pa'i ye shes kyi rgya mtsho chen por 'jug par nus pa ma yin pa de'i phyir / phreng ba dang / gos dang / rgyan la sogs pa shes rab la⁵⁸ dgos pa'i tshogs su gyur pa'i thabs shes rab kyi bdag nyid can de bzhin gshegs pa'i rig pa'i⁵⁹ tshogs sprul pa'i ye shes kyi ngo bo nyid phyag rgya chen po rtogs pa'i thabs su gyur ba / ye shes kyi phyag rgya gsungs pa yin no / ibid. ctd.)

Some practitioners of Tantric Buddhism, although they must belong to the élite, fall short of the very highest standards. They are not tempted by real-life sensual objects, but retain a residue of weakness for duality. Therefore they receive a consort who is visualised, a product of their own partly deluded conceptualising minds. She is the wisdom partner of the couple and, being imagined by the mind, is called ‘knowledge’. However, her ultimate function is as the means to the *mahāmudrā*.

There are others who are the lowest of [those with] the best faculties. Although [they] have attained delight in nondual wisdom (*jñāna*), [they] have not abandoned the passion (*'dod chags*, *rāga*) which is [erotic] desire (*'dod pa*, *kāma*). Hence they are distracted by their proximity to the objects of this [desire], and do not attain *samādhi*. That is why those [lowest of those with the best faculties] are permitted (**anujñā*) a Pledge Seal [Consort] (*samayamudrā*). She, for her part, has the qualities of beauty,

57 bar mar] D: P bar ma

58 shes rab la] D: P shes rab

59 rig pa'i] D: P rigs pa'i

youth and so on just as are described in the Tantras, is twelve or [sixteen] years old, belongs to the family (*kula*) of one's own Lord, is very well learned in *mantra* and Tantra, [and] is endowed with the best of qualities, such as the perfect pledge (*samaya*) and so on. Being in the *samādhi* in which one visualises (*bsam pa*) oneself in the form of the omniscient one which is complete great compassion, and [in which one visualises] with regard to the [consort that she] has the body made of *mantras* which is necessary [in order that she be] a god, and is wisdom incarnate, is in no way a defilement (*kleśa*), but is the method (*upāya*) itself.

(/ gzhan yang dbang po mchog gi tha ma gnyis su med pa'i ye shes la dga' ba yin du zin kyang 'dod pa'i 'dod chags ma spangs shing de'i yul dang nye bar gyur ba las rnam par g.yeng bar 'gyur gyi ting nge 'dzin du mi 'gyur bas de la ni dam tshig gi phyag rgya rjes su gnang ste / de yang rgyud las ji skad bshad pa'i gzugs dang lang tsho la sogs pa'i yon tan dang ldan pa / lo bcu gnyis pa la sogs pa'i tshad dang ldan pa / rang gi bdag po'i rigs las byung ba / sngags dang rgyud shin tu legs par bslabs pa dam tshig phun sum tshogs pa la sogs pa'i yon tan gyi khyad par dang ldan pa ste / de la yang lha'i dgos pa byas pa'i sngags kyi lus dang / shes rab kyi bdag nyid can dang / bdag nyid kyang snying rje chen po yongs su gyur pa'i thams cad mkhyen pa'i gzugs su bsam pa'i⁶⁰ ting nge 'dzin la gnas pa ni kun nas nyon mongs pa ma yin gyi thabs nyid yin no / ibid. ctd.)

Even the group of the best has a least good sub-group. Here they are those who may have correct insight, but still feel emotional attachment. They are attracted by the objects of desire. Although I have translated *kāma* strongly as '[erotic] desire' it might equally refer simply to the objects of the senses (*kāma[-guṇa]*), by the standard Sanskrit and Pāli linguistic convention we discussed in the Introduction (cf. above p.49). Thus the compound (**kāmarāga*) could be translated naturally as 'passion for the objects of the senses'. But there is an inherent conceptual ambivalence to the term. A theoretical link is being made in Tantric

60 bsam pa'i] D: P bsam pa'i ting nge 'dzin la gnas pa'i

Buddhism between passion as a weakness for the phenomenal world around us, the myth of whose reality is to be exploded, and the passion of a ritualised sexual encounter. Tripiṭaka articulates the connection by equipping those of lesser powers with progressively more physical consorts. Relations with the consort are to serve as a seal (*mudrā*) on the severing of intercourse with the hallucination that is the physical universe.

Tripiṭaka does begrudge the need of the lesser orders of the elect for a physical consort, as is shown by his conceding that they are ‘permitted’ (*rjes su gnang*, **anujñā*) such a woman, while for more advanced practitioners their virtual *mudrās* were simply ‘taught’ (*gsungs pa*, **ukta*). Yet he is equally keen to stress that, although they have not abandoned passion (*rāga*), normally a *kleśa*, their practice is far from defiled (*nyon mongs pa*, *kleśa/kliṣṭa*) but is the means (*upāya*) to the ultimate end, liberation. Their practice is pure and effective because of the entailed visualisation of oneself and the consort as divine beings. One performs the sexual yoga in order to enact one’s own identity with a Buddha who has his own consort. The divine couple are in turn themselves a penultimate stage on the progress to the totally abstract identification of the principles they represent, wisdom and means.

There are some who have very great desire. [Either] they have the poverty (**dāridrya*) of not being able fully to bring to perfection such forms [as the visualised consort]. Or, without themselves relying (*ltos pa*, **apekṣa*) on that [reality] they do not have great understanding (**buddhi/mati*) of reality, and without entering into that kind of complete focussing through meditation they are unable to make the mind of another rest in *samādhi* (*mnyam par ’jog*). It is for these that the Action Seal [Consort] (*karmamudrā*) is taught. And concerning that [teaching of an Action Consort] (*der-yang*), it is agreed because [one is thereby] doing ‘action’ (*karma*) which is appropriate [to the faculties of this type of practitioner].

(/ gang zbig 'dod chags lhag par che zhing de lta bu'i rnam pa yongs
 su rdzogs par mi nus pa'i dbul ba nyid dam / rang nyid de la ltos
 pa med cing de kho na nyid kyi blo che ba ma yin pa la gnas pa
 nyid kyis yongs su 'dzin pa de lta bu la mi 'jug par gzhan gyi⁶¹ sems
 mnyam par 'jog par mi nus pa de'i phyir ni las kyi phyag rgya gsungs
 pa yin la / der yang rjes su mthun pa'i las su byed pa nyid kyis nyams
 su len pa yin no / ibid. ctd.)

Although it has not been stated directly, there is even a sub-group of the lowest of the low within the company of the elect, making four groups to correspond to the well-known group of four *mudrās*. Tantric Buddhism does not leave them to fall by the wayside, unable to keep up with the struggle against their relatively lowly capacities. For them an Action Consort is taught. She is a real-life woman, like the *samayamudrā*, although again Tripiṭaka does not, or cannot bring himself to, say so in so many words.

Not only have the members of this unspecified group not abandoned desire, they suffer greatly from it. What further sets them apart from the previous group of candidates is an ever lower standard of insight. Thus they are incapable of mapping the divine forms onto themselves and their consorts. Alternatively, they do not have the skill to enter into meditation and equally, cannot, as a teacher perhaps, raise the consort beyond her purely physical status so that she is properly qualified, with the pledges (*samaya*) for example, in the way that a *samayamudrā* is. The definite meaning of the final line eludes me, but the sense seems to be that the consort in question is called a *karmamudrā*, because with her one practises on the level of action (*karma*) alone, without the higher levels of meaning.

Thus, the Teacher (*gtso bo*, **guru*) caused all sentient beings to achieve the state of omniscience, by having sentient beings

61 [gzhan gyi] D: P gzhan gyis

apply [themselves] to whatever they desire (*mngon par 'dod pa*, **abhilāṣa*). That is why the Mantrayāna (*sngags kyi theg pa*) is free of difficulties, and is the main (*gtso bo*, **pradhāna*) cause of enlightenment.

(/ *de ltar sems can gang gang la mngon par 'dod pa de de nyid la nges par sbyor bar mdzad pas / gtso bos sems can thams cad thams cad mkhyen pa'i gnas thob par mdzad pa'i phyir / sngags kyi theg pa nyid dka' ba med cing byang chub kyi rgyu'i gtso bo yin no / ibid. ctd.*)

Here we find what I have conjectured may be a hedonistic thesis proposed once more. As we have seen, Tripiṭaka's hedonism and hedonism in general need not refer to sheer indulgence for its own sake: '1. belief in pleasure as the highest good and mankind's proper aim. 2. behaviour based on this' (OED s.v.). If the term can be anglicised, crudely, as 'pleasurism' then the question remains: to what does 'pleasure' refer? Since the goal of Tantric Buddhism is again and again termed bliss, or great bliss (*mahā-sukha*, the religion might be called a 'blissism'. And if bliss and pleasure are to be coterminous, then obviously Tantric Buddhism is a type of hedonism. But Tripiṭaka himself has not specified the goal of the Mantranaya as bliss. Indeed, the root verse behind his commentary and our study of that commentary begins with the proposition that the goal of *mantra* and *pāramitā* ways is one and the same. Thus what he is focussing on is not hedonism as an end but hedonism— as systematised in Tantric Buddhism— as a means.

The last sentence translated includes a claim for the authenticity of the Mantranaya based on its being the teaching of the Teacher (*gtso-bo*, **guru*), the Buddha. The Tibetan version uses the same word (*gtso-bo*) as an adjective to describe Tantric Buddhism as the cause of enlightenment: it is the *main* (*gtso-bo*) cause. But there the Sanskrit original is most likely to be *pradhāna*. This terminological coincidence may have been introduced

in the Tibetan translation, since I cannot see how it could have been prefigured in the Indian original.

At all events, the sense is clear enough: that the *mantra* way is the most effective, because it is not difficult; and it is not difficult because one applies oneself to, or utilises (*sbyor ba*, **prayoga*), whatever one's desires dictate. This form of hedonism has been detailed as the choice of a variety of consorts, from the utterly abstract to the woman of flesh and blood. The hedonism has two aspects. Firstly, one is here permitted to desire a real woman if one suffers from the persisting fault of being prone to the defilement of passion, and so one's desires have full scope for their fulfilment. And, secondly, that fulfilment is possible since the consort is there, after all, for the generation of pleasure, or satisfaction, through passion. Nevertheless Tripitaka steers well clear of mentioning this unspoken function of practice with a consort. It is already noticeable, and we will see further when we compare positions within the tradition on sexual initiations (cf. Part II below), that Tripitaka was a conservative, seeking to limit the permissibility of such controversial behaviour. He does so by restricting its use to only the least qualified of those eligible for Tantric Buddhism. The following sentence illustrates how, instead, he expected his hedonism to function:

Indeed, it is taught:

'One cannot find success in dependence on extreme (*mi bzad pa*, **tīvra*) asceticism (*tapas*) and rules of restraint (*saṃvara*).' and so on.

For it is rightly said of those [austerities]:

'[They] disturb the equanimity (*mnyam nyid*, **samata*) of one's mind, and being distracted one cannot succeed.'

(/ *de bas na* /

dka' thub sdom pa mi bzad pa /

/ *bsten pas 'grub par mi 'gyur gyi* /

/ *zhes bya ba la sogs pa gsungs te* // *de rnams kyis ni* /

rang sems mnyam nyid g.yengs 'gyur la /
/ g.yengs pas 'grub par mi 'gyur ro /
/ zhes bya ba yang rigs pa nyid yin no / ibid. ctd.)

Tripiṭaka ends his exegesis on how Tantric Buddhism is superior because of its lack of difficulty (*aduṣkara*) by highlighting the absence of harsh ascetic practices. He does not say here whether such practices are typical of other forms of Buddhism, although that was implied in his introduction to the feature of having many means (p.109 above). As I mentioned above we will find that objection in other Tantric authors (cf. below p.296). Since the claim comes within the context of what sets his tradition apart from and above the way of Perfections we can assume the condemned alternative to indeed obtain there. He does say why such austerities are counter-productive, since they upset the equilibrium of the mind which is necessary for success. But as we have also already noted, this fact was discovered and proclaimed long before, by the historical Buddha. So this view is at least partially shared by the founder of Śrāvākayāna Buddhism, the original propounder of the Middle Way. But in this context pleasure is absence of pain (*a-duṣkara*), not some kind of potentially equally distracting ecstasy.

Having rounded off his arguments for the ease of the Mantranaya, which were premised on that being practised by a selection of subgroups of those with the sharpest faculties, Tripiṭaka completes his whole exegesis of his initial root-verse with a brief proof of what makes Tantric Buddhism appropriate for (only) the keen-witted (*tīkṣṇendriyādhikāra*).

For Those of Keen Faculties

Here, [in the Śrāvākayāna,] a yogin of the *tattva* of the [four Noble] Truth[s], does not know the means to the [one and only] truth (*de kho na nyid, tattva*). Therefore, he is called one of weak

(**mṛdu*) faculties.

(/ 'dir bden pa'i de kho na nyid kyi rnal 'byor pa ni de kho na nyid
kyi thabs ma shes pa'i phyir / dbang po rtul po⁶² yin par shes par
bya'o/ ibid. ctd.)

First, the lesser qualifications of those engaged in other paths are rehearsed. A practitioner of the Śrāvakayāna is dull-witted, for he lacks the conceptual insight into the nature of reality which is provided in the Mind-Only or Madhyamaka philosophies of the Mahāyāna, as explained before entering into the discussion of Tantric Buddhism (cf. above p.93).

A yogin of the *tattva* of the Perfections is mistaken with regard to means. Therefore, he is one of average (*madhyama*) faculties.

(pha rol tu phyin pa'i de kho na nyid kyi rnal 'byor pa⁶³ ni thabs
nyid la 'khrul pa yin pa'i phyir dbang po 'bring po yin no / ibid.
ctd.)

The early Mahāyāna, the Pāramitānaya, is practised, according to Tripiṭaka, by those who do not understand the nature of means, namely the possibility and necessity, argued for above (p.99), of acting for the benefit of all sentient beings at the same time, not confusedly one by one. Thus they have no more than average acuity.

But those who practice by means of *mantras* are never confused. Thus they are those of keen faculties (*tikṣṇendriya*).

(/ gsang sngags kyi sgor spyad pa bspyod pa rnam ni gang du yang
rnam par rmongs pa med pas na dbang po rnon po yin no / ibid.
ctd.)

62 rtul po] D: P brtul po

63 rnal 'byor pa] P: D rnal 'byor

It turns out that Tripiṭaka asserted that the Mantranaya is distinguished by being for those of sharp faculties on account of its lack of confusion, namely the confusion already expanded above. This exegesis makes the root-verse slightly tautologous. Not only does it say that Tantric Buddhism is free of confusion, because its practitioners are not confused with regard to means or method, but its claim that only the intelligent are eligible is based on their not being confused.

Tripiṭaka goes on to make a further point, based on the same high level of qualification possessed by Tantric Buddhists:

Thus, those of [keen] faculties have skill in unmistaken means about that which if others do it brings them to a bad rebirth, and so, having the *mantra* commitment (*brtul zhugs, vrata*) of practising everything (*kun du spyod pa, *samantacaryā*), [through those same risky activities] they attain the state of perfect purity.

(/ *de bas na dbang po rnam ni gang gzhan dag byed na ngan 'gror 'gro bar 'gyur ba de nyid kyi phyin ci ma log pa'i thabs la mkhas pas kun du spyod pa'i sngags kyi brtul zhugs can ni rnam par dag pa'i gnas thob par 'gyur ro* / *ibid. ctd.*)

This apologetic answers the objection citing the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna*, which introduced Tripiṭaka's root verse and its extensive auto-commentary (p.96 above). Tantric Buddhists have special powers to do things which would cause others to be reborn in a hell, animal realm, or realm of the hungry ghosts. They are high-powered, and thereby have the skill not to err in the method of performing those otherwise treacherous activities.

The objection was about passion. The only passionate element that Tripiṭaka has mentioned which is both part of the Mantranaya and superficially karmically bad, are the consorts and sexual relations implied thereby. Such relations would be karmically bad for a monk who has vowed celibacy. Indeed, if the consort is not his wife— as is, of course, demanded in most

texts (cf. below p.185)– real relations would be equally karmically bad for a layman. Tripiṭaka has given no hint as to whether the practitioner he has in mind is ideally a monastic or could equally be a layman. From the conservatism we detected in the relegation of physical consorts to the least able of the elect, one would infer that his is a pro-monastic position. In that case the apologetic here would refer directly to the breaking of celibate commitments.

Moreover, Tripiṭaka does not acknowledge the advocacy and legitimisation by the Mahāyāna of the way of Perfections too of all sorts of conventionally illicit behaviour (cf. above Introduction p.24). Hence we are left unsure about what forms of specifically Tantric pledges (*brtul-zhugs*, *vrata*) Tripiṭaka is referring to here. Nevertheless, his main point is that precisely those actions by which others are condemned to a dreadful rebirth enable Tantric Buddhists to attain the highest goal, the state of perfect purity. It is such argumentation for what one may call antinomianism which is the subject of this thesis.

As for the divisions of the average of those with average [faculties] and so on, they are not elaborated on [here], since they are self-evident.

(/ *rtul po'i rtul po la sogs pa'i dbye ba ni rang nyid kyis shes pas 'gyur bas na ma spros so* / *ibid* ctd.)

Following Tripiṭaka's cue we need not comment on this line. Those lower divisions are self-evident because he discussed the rest of Buddhism, for which alone they are eligible, earlier in his treatise. Instead we come now to the final summation of the lengthy exegesis of his initial proposition that Tantric Buddhism is better than the rest of the Mahāyāna, because of four distinguishing features:

Thus [we have explained in detail why] the Lord taught the *mantrayāna* as the best of all the ways (*naya*), for [the four] reasons [listed in the root verse,] beginning with its lack of confusion

with regard to both reality (*tattva*) and skilfulness in means. The great compassion of Samantabhadra which succeeds in saving (*yongs su skyob, paritrāṇa*) the realm of sentient beings, does not succeed in being of service (**upakāra*) to each and every (*nges pa, *ekānta/niyata*) sentient being. That is how it has been demonstrated that the *mantra* system (*mantrasāstra*) is superior to all [other] systems (*śāstra*).

(/ de bas na de kho na nyid dang thabs mkhas pa dag la ma rmongs pa la sogs pa'i rgyu rnams kyi sngags kyi theg pa nyid tshul thams cas kyi mchog yin par bcom ldan 'das kyi gsung te / kun du bzang po'i thugs rje chen po sems can gyi kham yongs su skyob pa'i mdzad pa 'grub pa ni so sor nges pa'i sems can la phan 'dogs ba'i lam gyis 'grub pa ma yin pas na sngags kyi bstan bcos ni bstan bcos thams cad las khyad par du 'phags pa grub pa yin no / ibid. ctd.—D 23v4, P 25a6)

Tripiṭaka reconfirms the authenticity of Tantric Buddhism by attributing it to the Lord Buddha, although this need by no means be the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. Then he sums up one last time what makes Tantric Buddhism best of all. Samantabhadra does in his great compassion save all the sentient beings in the world, but practice in the Perfection way of the Mahāyāna is not efficacious because of the confusion there about dealing with each being in turn, which would take close to an eternity. This appears to be his conclusive proof of the superiority of Tantric Buddhism, namely that a practitioner does not take literally the commitment to work for the benefit of everyone, but understands that to be possible only by having the perfect wisdom which understands that in reality there is no duality.

Such a claim is curious, seemingly fallacious, for it ignores the fact that the identical position is promulgated in such core Mahāyāna texts as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. It is particularly surprising that Tripiṭaka restated this point alone as the conclusion of his entire argument. Indeed, the contradiction has been remarked on before

now, notably by the Tibetan hierarch of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, Tsong kha pa.

Tsong kha pa contra Tripiṭakamāla

In his ‘Great Exposition of Secret Mantra’ (or ‘Stages of the Path to a Conqueror and Pervasive Master, a Great Vajradhara: Revealing All Secret Topics’, *rGyal ba khyab rdo rje ’chang chen po’i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad rnam par phye ba*, translated by Jeffrey HOPKINS as ‘Tantra in Tibet’ and ‘The Yoga of Tibet’ (1987 a and b)), Tsong kha pa includes a section on the unity of goal in the different Buddhist paths. There he quotes Tripiṭaka’s root verse and summarises the prose commentary thereon translated above (HOPKINS 1987a:145–149). He then goes on to refute Tripiṭaka’s arguments (*ibid.*:149–150), his ‘faulty interpretation’ (*ibid.*:145).

Tsong kha pa begins his refutation with the objection we have just offered, and quotes the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* V.9–10 (*ibid.*:149). Śāntideva’s Sanskrit original translates:

If the perfection of giving consists in making the universe free of poverty, how can previous Protectors have acquired it when the world is still poor, even today? The perfection of generosity is said to result from the mental attitude of relinquishing all that one has to all people, together with the fruit of the act. Therefore the perfection is the mental attitude itself. (CROSBY and SKILTON 1995:34)

The first of Śāntideva’s verses tells how this is *a posteriori* evident, since the current presence of suffering in the world would imply that no-one has ever yet followed the Bodhisattva path all the way. Hence it is as unreliable a method as the sacrifices performed by brahmins in order to bring them to meet Brahma, whom like a line of blind men (*seyyathāpi... andhahaveṇi*; MN ii.170) no-one can claim to have ever met. In addition to the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, other passages could be cited to show that the

Mahāyāna was aware that it is not possible to save everyone by literally fulfilling their most basic needs.

If, then, the very lack of confusion which Tripiṭaka attributes to Tantric Buddhism exclusively is so central to the original Mahāyāna already, what are we to make of his position? The root-verse is cited again and again in those who came after him, but never, as far as I know, is his commentary thereon discussed in the Indian literature. It may be that this element of his argument was so unconvincing that no-one would have had any interest in repeating it. His verse, on the other hand, became a slogan for Tantric Buddhism.

Indeed, Tripiṭaka's flow of thought is flawed in other respects, to which attention has been drawn above, as it was by Tsong kha pa in Tibet. We remarked on the tautology of arguing from non-obscurate to keen faculties, when both were intended in the verse to stand as independent features of general superiority (cf. also HOPKINS *ibid.*:149).

Another problem is the apparent contradiction between what we called Tripiṭaka's hedonism, and his conservative hierarchy of candidates. As Tsong kha pa puts it:

If it is asserted as using desire for the attributes of the desire realm in the path, then, since the highest trainees of Mantra do not have such desire [according to this wrong interpretation], this feature would be absent in the chief trainees of Mantra. (HOPKINS *ibid.*:149–150)

Within his own summary of his own hierarchy Tsong kha pa asserts that it

[is right] that the chief trainees of Highest Yoga must have great desire for the desire realm attributes of an external Knowledge Woman. (*ibid.*:148)

This debate, as played out in the Indian context, and eleventh century Tibet, will be the subject of our Part II.

Tripiṭaka's work is an example of how a Tantric Buddhist related his system to the rest of the Mahāyāna and the whole of Buddhism, i.e. it is an example of the most general level of apologetic. His stance was that the goal is the same throughout the Mahāyāna but the means of getting there differ. The implication of his argument is that, granted, a single goal may be the common ideal of both parts of the Mahāyāna, but in fact only Tantric practice provides the means for its attainment. The Mahāyāna has the right goal in mind but is not able to reach it. Although it is a fundamental Buddhist axiom that it is the thought that counts, in this context the disjunction between aiming for liberation and actually achieving it is fundamental.

There are other works, unpublished as well as published, which discuss the theoretical relationship between the branches of Buddhism.

The Sthitisamuccaya

In Kathmandu there are unprovenanced photographs of an unpublished Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscript, catalogued under the name 'Koṣakārikā'. It quotes Tripiṭaka's verse and comments on the four features of excellence, though in terms not derived directly from Tripiṭaka's own commentary. As so often in this dissertation, I am very grateful to Harunaga ISAACSON for telling me about this text, providing me with a copy of the manuscript, and reading it with me.

The text has been identified by Kazunobu MATSUDA (in an article on the discovery of the *codex unicus*, in Japanese, about which I have been informed by Harunaga ISAACSON: MATSUDA 1995) as the **Sthitisamuccaya* by *Sahajavajra (*gNas pa bsdus pa* by lHan cig skyes pa'i rdo rje). Unfortunately, the Tibetan translation seems to be even more obscure than the Sanskrit original, and does not assist much in deciphering the meaning. Both textual transmis-

sions are very problematic (and in many places discrepant). We had similar problems with Tripiṭaka's text, translated from the Tibetan translation above.

The *Sthitisamuccaya* ('Collection of Positions') is, as its name signals, a doxographical work which assesses the Vaibhāṣika, Sarvāstivāda, Vijñaptivāda and finally Madhyamaka doctrines, before coming to Tantric Buddhism, the *mantranīti*.

[First] one thus, [as previously described,] reasons on [and] establishes [the truth about] reality (*tattva*) according to the way of Perfections, as free of the tetralemma, not fixed, without beginning or end, without characteristics, dependently arisen [and] to be experienced as it is and in its own terms (*svasaṃvedya*). [But then] one should resort to the method of *mantras*. As though already at the goal [and] free of all dualities, one should mentally cultivate the enlightened mind (*bodhicitta*), according to the 'scriptural' (*āgama*) 'Connection of the Four Seals' (*caturmudrānvaya*). [One should cultivate *bodhicitta*] as: beyond intellectual analysis or doubts, to be experienced as it is and in its own terms, through the special experience of emptiness thanks to a teacher, [and,] the Great Bliss of [the union of] wisdom and means. For [Tripiṭakamāla], the expert in the method of *mantras*, taught the superiority of the *mantra* method:

'The *mantra* system is better [than that of the Perfections], even though the aim [of both] is the same, because of its lack of confusion, variety of methods, easiness, and because those qualified [for it] are high-powered.'

(*vicāryaivaṃ sthīrīkṛtya catuṣkoṭivivarjitaṃ
apraṭiṣṭhaṃ anutpādam*⁶⁴ *anīrodhaṃ alakṣaṇaṃ
pratītyayaṃ svasaṃvedyaṃ tattvaṃ pāramitānaye
mantranītiṃ*⁶⁵ *saṃāśritya caturmudrānvayāgamāt*

64 The following textual apparatus is largely as given to me in the first instance by Harunaga ISAACSON.

apraṭiṣṭhaṃ anutpādam] em: MS apraṭiṣṭhanutpādam

65 mantranītiṃ] em.: MS mantranīta; cf. D tshul

*avicāram asamdigdham viśiṣṭānubhavād guroḥ*⁶⁶
*śūnyatāyāḥ svasaṃvedyaṃ*⁶⁷ *prajñopāyamahāsukhaṃ*
*phalastha iva*⁶⁸ *nirdvandvo bodhicittaṃ*⁶⁹ *vibhāvayet*
*tad uktaṃ mantranītijñair*⁷⁰ *mantranītiviśeṣaṇaṃ*⁷¹
*ekārthatve 'py asaṃmohād bahūpāyād*⁷² *aduṣkarāt*⁷³
tīkṣṇendriyādhikārāc ca mantrasāstraṃ viśiṣyate; SthiSam f.11r3ff,
 cf. D f.96r6ff)

Thus the *Sthitisamuccaya* advocates progressing from dependence on the Madhyamaka philosophy enshrined in the way of Perfections to Tantric Buddhism. In the first one develops an intellectual understanding of the true nature of things. But it is only in the higher stage of practice that one actually brings the enlightened mind into being, via such techniques as visualising oneself already arrived at the goal. Tripiṭaka's verse is cited to make explicit Tantric Buddhism's superiority.

[The *mantra* method is not confusing because] the certainty that the constituents of the person (*skandha*) are [identical with] the Tathāgatas or Vajrasattva is better than the conviction that they are [either] momentary or mind-made or empty. The realisation of the goal [i.e. ultimate reality,] which is free of intellectual analysis, is determined [in the Perfection way to be attainable] by force of intellectual analysis. [If] without intellectual reflection (*parāmarśa*) [i.e. without that method of the Pāramitānaya], how [would it be attainable] without the [method of the] *mantra* way? How can the experience of emptiness [bring one to] undefiled great bliss, incomparable in all its forms, [and only] produced by identification with the deity? Once one has realised the Action

66 -ānubhavād guroḥ] em.: MS -ānubhavād aguroṃ

67 svasaṃvedyaṃ] corr.: MS śvasaṃvedyaṃ

68 iva] em.: MS īva

69 bodhicittaṃ] em.: MS bodhisatvaṃ; cf. D byang-chub sems

70 mantranītijñair] em.: MS mantranītajñair; cf. D tshul

71 mantranītiviśeṣaṇaṃ] corr.: MS mantranītetiviśeṣaṇaṃ; cf. D lugs

72 bahūpāyād] em.: MS bahūpād

73 aduṣkarāt] corr.: MS aduskarāt

Seal, [wisdom, and] then the Dharma Seal, [compassion,] in turn, how, without [their] mutual desire [could one attain] the fruit called the Pledge [Seal] (*samaya[mudrā]*)?

(*kṣaṇikā jñānarūpā vā śūnyā veti hi niścayāt, skandhās*⁷⁴ *tathāgatā vajrasattvo veti*⁷⁵ *suniścayaḥ*⁷⁶ *vicārabalanirñitā nirvicārā rthasaṅgatiḥ*⁷⁷ *parāmarśaṃ*⁷⁸ *vinaiva syāt katham mantranayaṃ vinā sarvākāranīraupamyam*⁷⁹ *nirāsravamahāsukhaṃ*⁸⁰ *devatāhaṃkṛtipraudhaṃ*⁸¹ *śūnyatānubhavāt*⁸² *katham karmamudrāṃ samāsādyā*⁸³ *dharmamudrāṃ prabhedataḥ parasparanirākāṅkṣaṃ*⁸⁴ *samayākhyaphalaṃ*⁸⁵ *katham. SthiSam ibid. ctd.*)

Sahajavajra expands on Tripiṭaka's verse, explaining the lack of confusion in Tantric Buddhism in terms of the certainty that phenomena, beginning with the apparition that is the self, are more than symbolically equivalent to the Buddhas and, ultimately, Vajrasattva. The rest of Buddhism offers a confused proliferation of analyses of reality, Vaibhāṣika, Cittamātra and Madhyamaka. He makes no reference to Tripiṭaka's own objectionable exegesis that Tantric Buddhism is not confused because of understanding method to be mental (or intentional) rather than literal. The analysis of the *mantra* system is clear because it can be fruitfully

74 skandhās] corr.: MS kandhās

75 veti] corr.: MS veti hi, remove hi for metre

76 suniścayaḥ] corr.: MS svaniścayaḥ

77 vicārabalanirñitā nirvicārā rthasaṅgatiḥ] conj. ISAACSON, cf. D ma brtags pa ru sbyor ba don: MS vicārabalanirñitanirācāroyārthasaṅgatiḥ

78 parāmarśaṃ] em.: MS parāmarthaṃ

79 sarvākāranīraupamyam] corr.: MS sarvākāranīraupamya

80 nirāsravamahāsukhaṃ] corr.: MS nirāsravamahāsukha

81 devatāhaṃkṛti-] conj. metri causa: MS devatāhaṃkāra-

82 śūnyatānubhavāt] conj. ISAACSON: MS śūnyatānubhava

83 samāsādyā] em.: MS samāsādyam; cf. D legs grub nas

84 parasparanirākāṅkṣaṃ] conj.: MS parasparanirākākṣaṃ

85 samayākhyaphalaṃ (metri causa for samayamudrākhyaphalam)] em.: MS samayāc ca phalaṃ

enacted (realised) in a way that the Madhyamaka's barren claim for underlying emptiness cannot. What relation can such emptiness have to the plenitude which is the goal?

The second of these Sanskrit verses is not unambiguous. The above translation remains tentative, with no implication that the Mantranaya is indispensable to achieving liberation. However, one could also translate the verse differently, to include that strong interpretation:

The realisation of the goal, [i.e. ultimate reality,] is determined, by conceptualisation, to be free of conceptualisation. [But] how could it [actually be realised,] without intellectual reflection [as it is], without the [method of the] *mantra* way?

At the outset Sahajavajra stated that his understanding of Tantric practice derives from the authoritative ('scriptural') *Caturmudrānvaya*. This text is the same as that usually referred to in the secondary literature as *Caturmudrānīścaya*, following the Sanskrit title transliterated in the colophon of the Tibetan translation (cf. CaMuĀn 1989:253(92), fn.1).

Here he refers to three of the four *mudrās* which are the subject of that other text, as evidence for the lack of confusion in Tantric Buddhism. There the *karmamudrā* is wisdom (*prajñā*) and the *dharmamudrā* is compassion (*karuṇā*; CaMuĀn 245(100)) and the cause of the next (*ibid.*:243(102)). *Mahāmudrā* is the state of realisation, great bliss (*mahāsukha* *ibid.*) and the Dharmakāya, but the *saṃyamamudrā* is that realisation activated by the addition of the other two bodies. As one might expect, without the union of wisdom and compassion, the *saṃyamamudrā* fruit cannot be realised. The absence of the intermediate *mahāmudrā* here may not be relevant. As I said, this passage of the *Sthitisamuccaya* remains rather obscure. Parts can be incorporated into our argument, while the rest is included here for the sake of completeness, and in the hope that it may become clearer with further study.

The great variety of means, or rather of the special experience, is in the divisions of *karma*, *dharma* and *mahā mudrās*; how could it be otherwise? Because [the *mantra* system is for] the extremely high-powered, [they] experience reality [for what it is, and can win] the enlightenment of great bliss through the enjoyment of all the sensual objects of desire. [Enlightenment is won] the first time one practises, through the overwhelming joy in that very [sensual enjoyment], because that same [enjoyment] is the means. Otherwise, how could [Tantric practice be] easy? [Because of the pledge] (*iti*) ‘I must fulfil all the perfections through mental cultivation’ [and] ‘[I] must attain the enlightenment of bliss’, how [could the practitioner] not be clever?

(*upāyasyātibāhulyaṃ*⁸⁶ *viśiṣṭānubhavasya vā karmadharmamahāmudrābhedenā katham anyathā atitīkṣṇendriyatvena*⁸⁷ *tathatānubhavād*⁸⁸ *api mahāsukhābhisambodhiḥ sarvakāmopabhogataḥ tatraiva nirbharaprītyā tasyaivopāyabhāvataḥ prathamābhyāsakāle syād anyathā ’duṣkaraṃ*⁸⁹ *katham bhāvanābalataḥ pūryāḥ*⁹⁰ *sarvāḥ*⁹¹ *pāramitā mayā, sādhyā sukhābhisambodhir iti tīkṣṇendriyaṃ kva na.*⁹² *SthiSam ibid.* ctd.)

Sahajavajra glosses the multiplicity of means in Tantric Buddhism as a multiplicity of the special experience which he earlier explained as an experience of emptiness with the help of the teacher. For him, the multiplicity consists in the three *mudrās*. Again, his interpretation differs from that in Tripiṭaka’s exegesis, where the plurality of means was identified with the variety of methods tailored to different character-types. Tripiṭaka did dis-

86 -bāhulyaṃ] corr.: MS -bāhulam

87 atitīkṣṇendriyatvena] corr.: MS atitīkṣṇendriyatvena

88 tathatānubhavād] cf. D stong nyid nyams su myong ba *śūnyatānubhava

89 ’duṣkaraṃ] corr.: MS ’duṣkara

90 pūryāḥ] corr.: MS pūryā

91 sarvāḥ] corr.: MS sarvā

92 kva na] conj.: MS kva ca; cf. D cis mi

cuss a group of four *mudrās*, yet that was in the context of the claim for easiness. But like Tripiṭaka, Sahajavajra premises the lack of difficulty in the Mantranaya on its being appropriate for those of keen faculties, a circular argument in the context of the root-verse as we have seen. However, his position differs again slightly from that of Tripiṭaka, for he emphasises that the practice is easy because of its engagement with the objects of the senses, and the bliss won thereby. This is close to what we called Tripiṭaka's hedonism, and not compromised in the way Tripiṭaka's position was by confining sensual involvement to the least worthy candidates. Sahaja also stresses subitism, or instant success, as a result of sensual engagement and a further characteristic of the Mantranaya's feature of being without difficulties.

His final verse relating to that of Tripiṭaka defines the candidate of Tantric Buddhism as high-powered because of two of that candidate's ideas. Firstly, he is aware of the efficacy of meditation in fulfilling the perfections. This point appears to correspond to Tripiṭaka's apparently fallacious explanation that the lack of confusion exclusive to Tantric Buddhism is a feature of its understanding that meditative attainments are what counts, not literal enactment of the perfections. The other smart idea highlighted here is the commitment to attain the enlightenment of bliss.

However, the translation of this final verse above is highly conjectural, incorporating a textual emendation based on the presence of the negative particle in the Tibetan translation. Leaving the Sanskrit unamended, I would translate the verse:

[Of the two postitions:] 'I must fulfill all the perfections through mental cultivation' or '[I] must experience the enlightenment of bliss', which is the clever [option]?

Such a translation employs the optional sense of *kva* (lit. where) to 'imply "great difference" or "incongruity" between phrases' (ĀPTE s.v.), but, technically, that requires it to be 'repeated in

co-ordinate sentences' (*ibid.*). There are other problems with this alternative translation, not least of which is the implication that in Tantric Buddhism one does not fulfil the perfections meditatively. After all, that was precisely Tripiṭaka's admittedly erroneous claim, that the rest of the Mahāyāna had failed to comprehend the mental mode of practice. However, perhaps the text is indeed better left unamended, if the point is that the Mantranaya practitioner has no business with the whole strenuous perfection path of progress (*sarvāḥ pāramitāḥ*), since he can easily realise enlightenment through and as bliss.

The difficulties in deciphering these few verses of the *Sthitisamuccaya* are no doubt a function of my still very limited familiarity with the impressive expanse of Tantric Buddhist literature. We have some excuse due to the extreme paucity of texts published, let alone reliable secondary studies and translations. Nevertheless, our difficulties may also reflect the awkwardness felt by theoreticians of Tantric Buddhism in their apologetic, particularly when it came to differentiating their tradition from that of the Mahāyāna and the rest of Buddhism.

Apologists for the Mantranaya, such as Tripiṭakamāla and Sahajavajra, do not want to claim that their system offers an original and unique goal. But in order to justify their personal allegiance to the *mantra* method they tend to make it the only effective means. This is not a logical necessity, since one might instead maintain that one's path, innovative or not, is specialised and so especially appropriate for a particular type of candidate. Thus, for example, Tantric Buddhism might have been designed for lay, as opposed to monastic, practitioners. Similarly, the Mantranaya could be appropriate for all the same people as the rest of Buddhism, and equally effective, only in a different manner: quickly, for example, and easily.

Some of these strands are discernible in a section of Mahāmatideva's unpublished Sanskrit commentary (*Tattvaviśadā/Tattvaviśadā*) on the *Ḍākinīvajrapañjaratantra*. The tantra is not known to have survived in full in Sanskrit, but verses such as the ones in question are quoted in many Indian sources, commented on more or less fully in two surviving Sanskrit commentaries, and may be compared with the Tibetan translations. Again I am grateful to Harunaga ISAACSON for providing me with the text of the verses and a copy of one manuscript of Mahāmati's commentary. His commentary survives in folios distributed between three manuscripts, as well as in the form of its Tibetan translation. Because the commentary is rather wordy, I shall confine myself here to on the whole only giving synopses of the Sanskrit.

The first verse tells that one should experience every sense-object as consisting completely of Buddhas. According to Mahāmati this is in order to free oneself of the false distinction subject-object, while the *Sthitisamuccaya* only mentioned that the *skandhas* are Tathāgatas.

(*yad yad indriyamārgatvaṃ yāyāt tat tat svabhāvataḥ
paramāhitayogena sarvaṃ buddhamayaṃ vahet* [28]
...nanu yat pratibhāti grāhyagrāhakarūpeṇa bhrāntam eva syād⁹³
ity āśaṅkyāha— **sarvvabuddhamayaṃ vahed.** sarvvabuddhānāṃ
jñānaṃ dvayaśūnyatā. yad yat pratibhāti tad alīkatvena paricchi-
natti, tasmād abhrāntam eveti. TaViḌaVaPaPa f.3r6 ff.)

The following verses teach how the Buddha can adapt himself to the varied needs of men, and vary his teaching accordingly. Mahāmati glosses the first verse as referring to the allocation of men to one of the five Buddha families because of the predominance of one of the five defilements (*kleśa*). The Buddha adapts

93 syād] em.: MS syās

like a chameleon, or in the Indian simile, like the fabled wish-fulfilling gem, a crystal which shines with the colour of whatever flower is placed upon it. Like the second of these verses, which is closely related to that of the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇatantra* we considered above (CMT X.29, cf. above p.75), the first verse is also found often elsewhere, with different readings. Mahāmati does not even comment on the second verse, which emphasises the *ad hominem* nature of the Buddha's teaching. Perhaps he saw it as a simple paraphrase of the one preceding. However, it could also be read as an argument for there being room for all varieties of Buddhism, each suitable for a different audience.

(yena yena hi⁹⁴ bhāvena manaḥ saṃyujyate nṛṇām
tena tanmayatām yāti viśvarūpo mañir yathā [29]
yena yena vinayena sattvā yānti vineyatām
tena tena prakāreṇa kuryād dharmasya deśanām [30]
yena yena bhāveneti. yena yena gotreṇety arthaḥ. tatra pañ-
cagotrāḥ⁹⁵ sattvā rāga-dveṣa-mohamānasyāgotrāḥ, tena tanmayatā-
m iti. tadbodhau⁹⁶ gotraṃ prāpya tanmayam tatsvarūpaṃ yā-
ti. etad eva dṛṣṭāntena draḍhayati. viśvarūpam mañir yatheti
viśvarūpe maṇav yavādikusumopadhānāc⁹⁷ citratvam. *ibid.* ctd.)

Two verses further on the claim is made that emptiness cannot be a soteriologically effective means because, it is said, then the goal too would be empty, since the two must be the same. We would object that cause and effect may be the same in certain crucial respects, but equally, they must differ also. Nevertheless, it is axiomatic in Tantric Buddhism that the means is the result, because of the two senses of 'realising' one's true Buddha-nature.

94 A single witness, the commentary on the *Yoginīsaṃcāratantra*, reads tu, otherwise all MSS agree hi.

95 pañcagotrāḥ] corr.: MS yatsvagotrāḥ; cf. Tib. rigs lnga

96 tadbodhau] corr.: MS tadbodhe

97 yavādikusuma-] corr.: MS yathā††kusama-

Mahāmāṭi interprets the verse as a response to a hypothetical objection concerning the vivid plurality of Tantric divine characteristics:

How can something with phenomenal (*prapañca*) [and hence illusory] form such as colour, attributes, head and so on, be a means to liberation?

He responds by glossing the non-attainment of Buddha-hood with

even after a hundred millions of aeons, because of the emptiness [of the means].

(*yadi śūnyam upāyaṃ syād buddhatvaṃ na tadā bhavet phalahetvor ananyatvād upāyaṃ śūnyatā na ca* [33])

nanu katham prapañcarūpaṃ⁹⁸ varṇṇacihnamukhādikaṃ muktyupāyaḥ syād⁹⁹ ity āśaṅkyāha- **yadi śūnyam upāyaṃ** iti. upāyarahitaṃ śūnyam eva yady upāyaḥ syāt, kalpakoṭīśatenāpi **buddhatvaṃ na** labhet aśūnyatvāt. ākāśānantyāyatanādyakṣanaprāptir eva syāt. pāramitānaye 'pi dānādipañcapāramitopāyena prajñāpāramitā bhāvyaṭe na kevalopāyarahitā. nanu śūnyatāivo-pāyo mārgāvasthāyāṃ phalāvasthāyāṃ ca saiva phalaṃ syād iti cet, **phalahetvor ananyatvād** iti. yadi hetur eva phalam, phalam eva hetuḥ, tayor abhedāt.¹⁰⁰ upāyaś ca **śūnyatā na ca** bhavet. hetuḥ prapañcarūpaḥ sālambanatvāt, phalaṃ niṣprapañcarūpaṃ nirālambanatvāt, tasmāt na hetuphalayor abhedāḥ siddhaḥ. *ibid.* ctd.)

Having rejected emptiness as a method, the tantra seeks to temper its attack on the Madhyamaka and the Perfection of Wisdom. The next verse explains why the Buddhas taught emptiness:

in order to prevent the grasping after a soul of those who have fallen away from correct views in their greed for doctrines of an existent self.

98 prapañcarūpaṃ] em.: MS pañcarūpaṃ; cf. Tib. spros pa

99 syād] corr.: MŚ śyād

100 abhedāt] corr.: MS abhedāta

Madhyamaka and Perfection Vehicle emptiness have their own rôle: to persuade lost souls back from the empty wilds and onto the straight and narrow. Arguably, the whole of Buddhism is dedicated to convincing people that they have no self and therefore need not carry on in the hectic round of death and rebirth. And one would think that every unenlightened being preserves some of that delusion. Yet, the implication is that Tantric Buddhism is for those who both do not hunger after a self and so can with impunity take on a divine identity.

(*sudṛṣṭibhyo*¹⁰¹ *vipannānām ātmadṛṣṭigaveṣiṇām āmagrahanirāsārthaṃ śūnyatā deśitā jinaiḥ* [34]
 nanu viparyāśahānārthaṃ bhagavatā śūnyatā deśitā, viparyāśaś ca saṃsāra ity āśankyāha- **drṣṭibhyo vipannānām** iti. dharmānairātmyādīdrṣṭibhyo vipannāḥ, pratyuta pratikūlāḥ. **ātmadṛṣṭigaveṣiṇām** iti. ātmadṛṣṭigaveṣiṇaḥ ātmagrahe abhiniviṣṭāḥ¹⁰² teṣāṃ āmagrahanirāsārthaṃ śūnyatā deśitā jinaiḥ. *ibid.* ctd.)

If emptiness is for those hung up on the idea of a self, what does the *Dākinīvajrapañjaratantra* have in mind as the true method for enlightenment?

Therefore the means is the highest bliss (*sukhasaṃvara*), namely the *maṇḍala* circle. By the yoga of identity with a Buddha Buddhahood is soon won (v.35).

Mahāmati's commentary draws out the contrast between trouble-free rapid arrival via the Mantranaya and an almost endless slog through the way of perfections. He sets the way of perfections up to be trounced with an almost sarcastic objection:

Enlightenment is taught in the Perfection Way [to be attainable]
 by means of the five perfections of giving and so forth [provided

101 *sudṛṣṭibhyo*] : ku is found in a single quote.

102 *abhiniviṣṭāḥ*] corr.: MS *atiniṣṭāḥ*

they are] permeated by the perfection of wisdom, after three innumerable aeons [and] by such difficult practices as sacrificing one's head. What then is the need for a method like the *maṇḍala* circle [of deities] and so on?

Mahāmāti responds to his straw-man opponent that it is precisely because of the patently unsatisfactory nature of the rest of the Mahāyāna that a new means has been taught:

the circle of deities which embody the five perfections, together with their paraphernalia. Because there is nothing hard or difficult, through the enjoyment of all the objects of the senses, [this means] is **the highest bliss**, because it consists of joy by the bliss of the enjoyment of the two [sexual] organs indeed. [This is **through yoga in the form of the ego of a deity**], not with one's natural [inferior] ego. It is **soon** because one attains Buddhahood in this very life.

(*tasmān maṇḍalacakrākhyam upāyaḥ sukhasaṃvaram*
[buddhāḥaṃkārayogena buddhatvaṃ] *na cirād* [bhavet]¹⁰³ [35]
nanu pāramitānaye dānādipañcapāramitopāyena prajñāpāramitā-
nuviddhena tribhiḥ kalpāsaṅkhyeyaiḥ śīrodānādiduṣkarasevayā
bodhir uktā. kiṃ maṇḍalacakrādyupāyēneti cet, **tasmān maṇ-
ḍalacakrākhyam upāyaḥ sukhasaṃvaram** iti. yasmād evaṃ **tasmā-
t** saparicchadapañcapāramitāsaṃgrahabhūta devatācakram **upā-
yaḥ**. kaṣṭaduṣkarābhāvāt sarvākāmapabhogena **sukhasaṃvaram**.
dvayendriyāsvādasukhenaiva prītimayatvāt. na prākṛtāḥaṃkāre-
ṇa. **na cirād** iti. ihaiva janmani buddhatvalābhāt.¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* ctd.)

According to Mahāmāti the indicators of the excellence of Tantric Buddhism begin with the cast and props in a *maṇḍala* which incarnate such elements of the traditional Buddhist path

103 buddhāḥaṃkārayogena buddhatvaṃ... bhavet: These three words of the last two pādas have no surviving Sanskrit testimonials, but they may be reconstructed with reasonable certainty from the Tibetan translation: sangs rgyas nga rgyal rnal 'byor gyis sangs rgyas nyid du myur bar 'gyur.

104 -lābhāt] em.: MS lābhācca

as the perfections. One no longer needs to go painstakingly step by step along the Buddhist path, for it can all be achieved simultaneously in the *maṇḍala* complex that represents each and every element.

The *maṇḍala*'s function as a more than symbolic representation of mental states can be compared to the well-known Roman practice of the art of memory. By the first century AD, authors such as CICERO in his *De Oratore* and QUINTILIAN in his *Institutio Oratoria* had fully described an artificial memory system, explicitly designed to enable an orator to produce a fluent and perfectly structured speech (cf. CICERO 1942 and QUINTILIAN 1965, *passim*). One begins with a context, usually a building, within which one identifies a series of sites (Latin *loca*) such as niches, arches and so on. In those places one locates in order selected signs or symbols, visual cues for the topics of the speech. When the time comes for the orator to perform, he need only stroll in his mind through the architecture of his ideas as he talks, able to extemporise securely on each in turn, thanks to the prompting of signs attached between columns and in corners.

A Tantric Buddhist mentally builds his palace, the *maṇḍala*, and goes one step further, animating it with, for example, a cast of deities and their consorts, and visualising himself as the central character at the heart of the scene. Instead of locating concepts as symbols attached to architectural features, those features themselves embody elements of the Buddhist path to awakening. Because one creates every bit of the *maṇḍala* architecture *ex nihilo*, having first dissolved the whole of reality into emptiness, one can be said to have completed the whole Buddhist path in the process. That is why Mahāmāti contrasts the *maṇḍala*'s embodiment of the perfections with the endless trial and labour (*duṣkara*) of bringing them to fulfilment in the conventional pedestrian manner.

Mahāmati also glosses that the means is bliss with that ease of attainment, because one indulges the senses. The *maṇḍala* is no dry procedure but an aesthetic experience, in which one is first the artist creating a new world, and then the star of the action. The method is bliss and also more erotically sensual because of the joy generated in the sexual union of oneself as Buddha with one's consort. 'Not with one's natural [inferior] ego' is Mahāmati's gloss for 'by the yoga of identity with a Buddha'. He appears to offer it as an apologetic for the sexual intercourse which produces joy, which takes place while one is not in one's natural state of being. He does not draw out the implication that therefore one is not guilty because the conventional rules, whether of monasticism or a conservative society, do not apply.

Finally, although emphasising the speed of Tantric means, the tantra and its commentator leave unquestioned the efficacy of the rest of Mahāyāna Buddhism, at least. Yet, by exclusion, it would have only a long-term effect, across the boundaries of reincarnation. This is just how the hypothetical objection introducing Mahāmati's commentary on this verse defined enlightenment via the perfection way. It might be difficult for us to imagine that people who believed in reincarnation could also be content to believe that salvation lay in some distant future rebirth, but that is comparable to the Christian idea of heaven being located only in the hereafter. Certainly Tantric Buddhism has a quite different attitude; its proponents are relatively impatient for their success. The issue then becomes one of whether a lengthy practice over many years is nevertheless unavoidable, except perhaps for a very few, or whether it is really an almost simultaneous fast-track to arrival.

Verses 33–36 of the tantra (i.e. one further than we have studied), and especially Mahāmatideva's commentary thereon, are also analysed with approval in Tsong kha pa's 'Great Exposition

of Secret Mantra', to which we have already referred (HOPKINS 1987a:117–122). He points out that Mahāmati's references to sexual union and enlightenment in this life are valid but only if restricted to 'Highest Yoga Tantra' (*ibid.*:121). The first objection depends on how one classifies the *Guhyasamāja*, for example, which is the first scripture to teach sexual initiation. Tsong kha pa does call it a 'Highest Yoga Tantra' (*ibid.*:54), although that is not, as we saw above, the usual Indian classification. Similarly, we will see in a moment that a venerable commentator on one Yoginī (i.e. 'Highest Yoga') tantra distinguishes that class from the Yoga tantras *despite* the fact that both offer enlightenment in this life. Tsong kha pa says that he cited the tantra in order to eliminate any doubt that one could achieve Buddhahood without deity yoga. Thus both he and the tantra are in agreement that it is this feature which gives the Mantranaya potency far beyond that of the Pāramitānaya.

Ratnākaraśānti on the Hevajratantra

Finally, a Higher Tantric scriptural claim for its own efficacy, from the *Hevajratantra*:

There can be no success (*siddhi*) by means of any of the *Vedas* or [other] accepted traditions, or through the collections of ritual. Purification of being [brings success, but only] after a [long] interval of becoming, [that is to say] reincarnation. Nor is there any success in this world or another without that [ultimate knowledge or *sahajānanda* which have been referred to in previous verses]. He who has known the *Hevajra* [*Tantra*] will not strive in vain.

(*samastavedasiddhāntaiḥ karmaṇāśāntaiḥ karmaprasarādibhis tathā*¹⁰⁵)

105 karmaprasarādibhis tathā] 3MSS (according to Harunaga ISAACSON): ed. karmaprasaraṇādibhiḥ

*siddhir na syād; bhavaśuddhyā*¹⁰⁶ *punarjanmabhavāntare*.¹⁰⁷
na ca tena vinā siddhir iha loke paratra ca.
na jñātaṃ yena hevajraṃ vyarthas tasya pariśramaḥ. HT I.viii.54–55)

I am again grateful to Harunaga ISAACSON, who has been editing these two important Sanskrit commentaries on the tantra, for providing me with a copy of a manuscript of Ratnākaraśānti's *Muktāvalī* ('A String of Pearls') and likewise for Kamalanātha's *Ratnāvalī* ('A String of Jewels').

Ratnākaraśānti begins his commentary with the statement that:

The [following] pair of verses, beginning with **All**, [have been taught] in order to show what distinguishes this [*Hevajra*] tantra from other [Buddhist and non-Buddhist] scriptures.

He continues:

The *Vedas* are non-[Buddhist] texts. **The accepted traditions** are the *sūtrāntas* of the canon of the Śrāvakas. [They are called *sūtrāntas*] because they do bring an end (*anta*) to reincarnation. **The collections of ritual** are those for pacification and so on laid down in the [lower classes, especially the Kriyā tantras,] of the *mantra* way. By means of none of these **is there success**, which means that there is no perfect enlightenment [thereby].

(*āgamāntarebhyo 'sya tantrasya viśeṣapradarśanāya ślokadvayaṃ samastetyādi. vedā bahiḥśāstrāṇi. siddhāntāḥ śrāvakaṭīṭakasya sūtrāntāḥ, siddhaḥ punarbhavasyānta ebhir*¹⁰⁸ *iti kṛtvā. karma-prasarāḥ śāntikādayo mantranītivihitāḥ. ebhiḥ sarvaiḥ siddhir na syāt samyaksaṃbodhir na bhavatīty arthaḥ.* MuĀv f66r4ff ad HT I.viii.54)

106 bhavaśuddhyā] *Muktāvalī* here and cf. Tib. srid pa dag pa'i: ed. bhavec chuddhyā

107 punarjanmabhavāntare] conj. following *Muktāvalī*: ed. punarjanma bhavāntare

108 punarbhavasyānta ebhir] corr., cf. *idem* in *Yogaratnamālā*: MS punarbhavasyāntarebhir

[An obvious question is:] ‘Is there or is there not [perfect enlightenment] in the Way of the Perfections?’ [In answer thereto] the verse says **being** and so forth. [The perfections] purify by the destruction of the moral and intellectual defilements; that is the purification and it is in the instrumental case. The path is characterised by the six perfections. By means of that [purification] there is indeed enlightenment. Moreover, in [the compound] **after a [long] interval of becoming, [that is to say] reincarnation, reincarnation** is a succession of births. That same [reincarnation,] **becoming**, is *samsāra*, because it is [almost] as long as *samsāra*. The sense is that there is a succession of rebirths through three incalculable aeons, [and] by that long is there an **interval** [to enlightenment].

(*pāramitānītau bhavati na vety āha- bhavetyādi*.¹⁰⁹ *śuddhyanti kleśajñeyāvarāṇakṣayād anayeti śuddhiḥ śatpāramitālakṣaṇo mārgaḥ. tayā bhavaty eva bodhiḥ, kin tu punarjanmabbhavāntare punarjanme ti*¹¹⁰ *janmaprabandhaḥ, sa eva bhavaḥ samsāraḥ, samsāravat dīrghatvāt. triṣu kalpāsamkhyeyeṣu janmaparamparety arthaḥ. tenāntare vyavadhāne sati bhavatīty arthaḥ. MuĀv ibid. ctd.)*

The first of our pair of verses refers to ‘collections of ritual’ which are glossed by Ratnākaraśānti as rites belonging to the Mantranaya, such as the four *catuḥ karmāṇi*, pacification and so on (referred to above p.95, and cf. below p.262). The closely-related commentary published by SNELLGROVE together with the tantra, Kṛṣṇa’s *Yogaratanmālā*, glosses those ‘collections of ritual’ as ‘*Kriyā* tantras and so on’ (*kriyātantrādayaḥ*; YoRaMā p.129). The *Vedas* and, according to Ratnākaraśānti, the *Sūtras* of the Śrāvakayāna, do not bring success, ‘perfect enlightenment’. But neither does Tantric Buddhism, which is purely instrumental up to but not including the Yoga tantras. Both Kṛṣṇa and Ratnā-

109 This *pratīkā* indicates that Ratnākaraśānti read *bhavaśuddhyā* as opposed to the published ed.’s *bhavec chuddhyā*

110 punarjanmeti] corr.: MS punajamnani

karaśānti give a creative etymology for the etymologically obscure synonym of *sūtra*, *sūtrānta* (probably a back formation from the Pāli *suttanta*), saying that it brings an end (*anta*) to rebirth. This cessation of reincarnation may look like success, but it is failure in terms of the Bodhisattva vow not to disappear into the ether of **pratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*, and therefore is not perfect enlightenment.

With regard to the perfection tradition of the Mahāyāna, on the other hand, both Ratnākaraśānti and Kṛṣṇa say that perfect enlightenment is attainable thereby, but, as we have seen before, only after what seems close to an eternity. The endless round is unavoidable if one is to fulfill one's Bodhisattva vow in the conventional manner. All these points are fully expressed only in the commentaries; verse 54 is itself somewhat cryptic. Thus I have given a conjectural edition and translation of the final words (*bhavaśuddhyā punarjanmabhavāntare*), in accordance with how I understand Ratnākaraśānti's commentary.

Ratnākaraśānti's commentary on the second verse is introduced with the plain statement that enlightenment is also speedily attainable elsewhere in Tantric Buddhism, outside the Yoginī *Hevajratantra* itself:

In the Yoga tantras it is taught that enlightenment [is attainable] in this very life. [In order to clarify] what makes this [*Hevajratantra*] better than those, [the Lord] spoke [the verse] beginning **Nor...** In other tantra[s] too there is highest enlightenment, in this very birth or in another proximate birth, [but] **not without that *sahajānanda*.** [In order to show] what then does distinguish this [*Hevajra* system] from those [Yoga tantras] he said **the *Hevajra*** and so on. The [overall] sense is that practitioners should know the *Hevajra* [tantra] in order perfectly to experience that [*sahajānanda* which is merely] hinted at in the other, [i.e. Yoga,] tantra[s]. The implication is that this [*Hevajra*] is the 'higher tantra' to those, [connected with them, and expanding thereupon].

(*yogatantreṣu ihaiva janmani bodhir uktā. tebhyaḥ ko 'yātiśaya*

*ity āha— na cetyādi. ibaiva janmani janmāntare vā sannihite yad
uttamā bodhis tantrāntare^{III} 'pi bhavati, na sā tena saha-jānande-
na vinā. asya tarhi tebhyaḥ ko viśeṣa ity āha— hevajram ityādi.
tantrāntare sūcitasya tasya samyakparijñānārthaṃ hevajram eva
sādhakair^{II2} jñātavyam ity arthaḥ. idan teṣāṃ uttaratantram iti
bhāvaḥ. MuAv ad HT I.viii.55 *ibid.* ctd.)*

Ratnākaraśānti interprets the second of our pair of verses as signalling the *Hevajratantra*'s superiority over even Yoga tantras, assuming that they are also soteriologically efficacious. That group is represented, paradigmatically, as we have seen before, by the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, but may also include the *Guhyasamāja*. Ratnākaraśānti is himself inconsistent in his writings in moving between the four and five-fold classification of the tantras, i.e. classing the *Guhyasamāja* either as a Yoga or on its own as a Yogottara tantra. According to him, the unelaborated pronoun in the first *pāda* of the verse refers back to the *sahajānanda* in the recent discussion of the *ānandas*, the four joys (HT I.viii.30–35).

SNELGROVE, in his translation of the tantra, does not follow the commentarial lead, despite the fact that he simultaneously published Kṛṣṇa's *Yogaratanmālā* which has the same analysis. He translates the verse as follows:

Vain is the striving of him who does not know Hevajra, for without him there can be no perfection in this world or the next. (1959:78)

While that reading of the verse makes *prima facie* perfect sense, it does not respect the grammar of the Sanskrit. The leading pronoun could not normally be construed with the following relative, as is the case in English word order, and the nominative *hevajram* is a neuter in agreement with the unspoken *tantram*, not an error for the masculine divinity.

III [tantrāntare] corr.: MS tatrāntare

II2 [sādhakair] corr.: MS sādhakai

A further detail ignored by SNELLGROVE and crucial in the verse's original composition, as well as to the doctrine of the commentators, is that the Sanskrit specifies that one who has known the text will not strive in vain, not that one who has not known the text will strive in vain. This exclusive second meaning would be rendered in the single word *ajñātam*, and is not conveyed by the present *na jñātam*. Metre cannot be appealed to as the overriding factor here, since both alternatives scan the same.

Thus the verse allows Ratnākara's interpretation, even if it does not elaborate as he does. The *Hevajra*, and possibly by extension other members of the Yoginītantra class, are not qualitatively distinct from the Yogatantras, inasmuch as both offer enlightenment and with the option of liberation in this very life. The quantitative difference is that the Yoga tantras, and here this would refer to the *Guhyasamāja*, only briefly mention or hint at the *sahajānanda*, whereas the *Hevajra* has a great deal to say on the topic. Again, such a distinction would presumably result in the qualitative difference that the Yoginī tantras are guaranteed to bring success, while with the *Guhyasamāja* it is a rather hit and miss affair, depending on whether one can pick up on the hints given.

We have now come to the end of our study of the most general level of Tantric Buddhist Apologetics. The question was whether, and then how, scripture and commentators of the Mantranaya claimed they belonged to the overarching unities of the Mahāyāna and Buddhism. Much of the answer was an analysis of the fundamental differences defined between Tantric Buddhism and the two larger groupings with which affiliation had been petitioned. We concluded, much as we began, with the lack of unity within the Mantranaya itself. Our central concern has been, and will continue to be, with the so-called Higher Yoga classes, namely the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Yoginī* tantras. These are the later texts and,

according to their self-perception, the culmination of the Tantric tradition. The time has come to address a particular group of rituals which are enactments of a particular distinguishing feature of that Higher Yoga division, and one which loudly demands a 'reasoned defence', a detailed apologetic.

Part II

Tantric Buddhism, Sexual Initiation and Monasticism: Are They Compatible?

Introduction

The mutual compatibility of Tantric Buddhism and sexual initiation and monasticism is the core question of this dissertation. We have prepared the ground for this study in two ways. First of all, in the Introduction, we examined precedents: which rules of ethical behaviour are binding on a monk and then a Bodhisattva; and what the Pāli Canon ('early' Buddhism) had to say about bliss, both pleasure and happiness. In Part I we analysed the general self-perception of Tantric Buddhism with regard to its relationship with, on the one hand, the Pāramitānaya Mahāyāna, and on the other, 'early' Buddhism.

Our present question will be subdivided into three studies. The first is whether sexual initiation is required, a *sine qua non* or necessary condition, in Tantric Buddhism. Next we will investigate the eligibility of monastic practitioners for sexual initiation. The final issue is whether Tantric Buddhism is for monks.

If one were to formulate these three elements algebraically, one could say that T stands for practising Tantric Buddhism, S for being given the sexual initiations, and M for monks. In that case the questions could be represented: is S required for T? are M eligible for S? and are M eligible for T? This formulation reveals the potential for a syllogistic relationship between the answers to the first two questions and the third. Thus, if S is required for T, and M are not eligible for S, then M cannot be eligible for T (and similarly: if S is required for T, and M are eligible for S, then M can be eligible for T; and differently again, and not a syllogism: if S is not required for T, then whether or not M are eligible for S does not help to answer whether M are eligible for T). However, we are not studying mathematics, and we will not find such unambiguous answers to our questions, certainly not to the extent of a single structure of the relationships.

Different authors will be found to hold differing positions.

Sometimes their pronouncements appear to be deliberately ambiguous. Our assessment of the three permutations within the core question will not demand that they be symmetrical. Nor need they be strictly independent or parallel. This is simply a practical way to proceed in the analysis of a complicated subject.

In phrasing the third combination: ‘Is Tantric Buddhism for monks?’, the question is as expressly vague as I have indicated the answers of our authors to be. It will allow for discussion of the respective entitlements of both monks and the unordained. Each of our questions must be examined in the context of historical developments and the changing natures of the religion. The intention is that careful study of these matters of allegiance should draw out of obscurity the process of development and change through time.

Underlying our investigation will be an interest in antinomianism and its institutionalisation, or its codification into a norm, paradoxical as that may seem. One reason to study the initiations is because of their dual nature in this regard. Thus, they are both extraordinary— and, in many respects, illicit— acts and at the same time the very formal commencement of a student’s systematic progress towards a prescribed goal.

‘Initiation’ here translates the Sanskrit *abhiṣeka*. This was translated into Tibetan as *dbang-(b)skur*, which has in turn been translated into English, more or less literally, as ‘empowerment’. However, the Sanskrit has no etymological relationship with terms of power (Tib. *dbang*). The root *sic* refers to sprinkling and thence anointing, as in the anointment of ancient Indian monarchs, albeit with water in India and not the etymological oil (ointment) of ancient Western anointing. That Indian concept of anointment could well be translated by a term of European religious vocabulary, namely consecration (cf. the historical consecration in Europe of both priests and kings).

By referring to the initiations as the point of transformation, one could be said to be committing a solecism or speaking incorrectly. The possible solecism is to refer to a collection of moments as a point of transformation. A related objection could be made to translating *abhiṣeka*, of which there are a series, 'initiation'. Initiation is a beginning, but it seems pedantic to quibble about whether there can be more than one such beginning or initiation. The word's senses of admission into a group and a practice, especially secret rituals, as well as instruction in a science or technique (cf. OED s.v.), make initiation an appropriate translation, one which we will on the whole prefer to 'consecration'.

We look to the tradition to provide some sort of explanation of how these ritual moments, above all the higher sexual ones, transform the initiand. Behind this lies a broader question: what rôle do ritual acts have on a Buddhist path?

Officiated sexual initiation is almost *per se* an antinomian activity, for it transgresses the norm that sexual activity is private to those engaged (with the possible exception of the unique first night of marriage which is so crucial and hence ritualised in many cultures). By asking whether the sexual initiations are indispensable to the practice we are trying to find out whether they are indeed features representative of what we have called antinomianism as a norm.

The second question, whether monks are eligible for these initiations, highlights a different problem. Monastic status is of course partially defined in terms of celibacy. So how can monks hope to be something quite other than celibate with impunity? Here the antinomianism is a matter of contravening the ancient Vinaya, the highly formalised ethical code which from the beginning of Buddhism, a monastic institution, dictated even the tiniest detail of a monk's daily life.

The initiations are just one example of the antinomian prac-

tices advocated in Tantric Buddhism. In our discussion they will be symbols of a wider phenomenon, as well as events of interest in their own right. Thus, the second question leads into the third, which is one of the big questions in the field of Tantric studies. By assessing what specific status made one eligible for sexual initiations and in what context, the larger issue of who actually practised Tantric Buddhism is also brought to the fore. As always, there is the distinction between theory and practice, the ideal candidate and the real-life practitioners.

The last question, concerning historical fact, is hard to answer. We normally understand the lives of the Mahāsiddhas, the 84 Great Adepts of hagiographical renown, to be evidence for an extra-monastic and anti-institutional first phase of Tantric Buddhism (two complete collections of these biographies are preserved in Tibetan, while separate biographies appear in Tibetan histories of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism; cf. refs. in SNELL-GROVE 1959:I.12). On the other hand, the ritual manuals and vast number of authored texts—several of which will be our sources here—prove that Tantric Buddhism thrived in a monastic setting. The study of the eligibility of monks for sexual initiation should enable one to infer something about the changing reality of the culture of our area and period. It remains unknown in what milieu Tantric Buddhism developed, and how and why it entered the great institutions.

Fortunately there is more than one contemporary key for gaining access to our subject. Besides the Indian Tantric Buddhist ritual manuals and scripture, one has to investigate the Śaiva Tantric traditions, as well as other Indian texts, for the wealth of parallels, divergences and eventual convergences such study would yield.

Alexis SANDERSON has been pre-eminently engaged in this pursuit. He has even demonstrated the word for word textual dependence ('pious plagiarism') of late Buddhist Higher Yoga Tantras of

Samvara (the *Laghuśaṃvara* or *Herukābhīdhāna*, *Abhidhānottara* and *Samvarodaya*) on a group of esoteric Śaivite Tantras, the *Vidyāpīṭha* of the Bhairava section of the canon (*Jayadrathayāmala*, *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* and *Picumata*) (1994:94–95). But that undeniable wholesale borrowing does not necessarily shed light on earlier developments or directions of influence.

Nondual Kashmiri Śaivism itself is said to have acquired its doctrine of consciousness as the true reality from the Mind Only (*cittamātra*, *vijñānavāda*) stream of Mahāyāna Buddhism (TORELLA 1992, 1994). Raffaele TORELLA has shown, for example, that:

The principal argument in favour of this [*sarvasarvātmavāda*] doctrine clearly derives from the Vijñānavāda. (1994:XV).

Sarvasarvātmavāda is the idea that there is one principle which exists equally in all things, something the Tantric adept of Śaivism and Buddhism alike has to realise experientially, whether that principle is identified as Śiva and consciousness or consciousness and Enlightenment.

In addition to SANDERSON's detailed work on the relationship of the later, most esoteric traditions of Buddhist and Śaivite Tantra, the earlier traditions should also be closely compared. David Seyfort RUEGG and others have proposed that both traditions stem from some shared Indian religious substrate which cannot be identified (cf. refs. given by SANDERSON, 1994:99, fn.6). As SANDERSON reasonably says:

The problem with this concept of a 'religious substratum' or 'common cultic stock' is that they are by their very nature entities inferred but never perceived.... (*ibid.*:92)

He asserts that:

Almost everything concrete in the system is non-Buddhist in origin even though the whole is entirely Buddhist in function. (*ibid.*).

Incontrovertible is his detailed proof of late Buddhist dependence on Śaivism, for certain

ritual procedures, style of observance, deities, mantras, maṇḍalas, ritual dress, Kāpālika accoutrements, specialized terminology, secret gestures and secret jargons. (*ibid.*:94).

However, his point that:

When we consider Tantric Buddhism in terms of its origin we see Śaiva influences at every turn, (*ibid.*:96)

still leaves room for discussion.

For my part, I am more inclined to hypothesise that early Tantric Buddhism does belong to some broader matrix of Indian religiosity, by no means restricted to Śaivism as the mother. Yet to tackle this vast question in the present thesis would be premature. We must accept for the moment that the beginnings of Tantric Buddhism are not visible, while late texts definitely model themselves on Śaivite parallels. Albeit there is considerable similarity between the two ritual traditions, nevertheless the Buddhist initiations, at least, are not simply directly copied from Śaivite originals, for the following reasons:

We have already referred to the ancient royal precedent for the term *abhiṣeka*. Although there are initiations in Śaivism, they are not called *abhiṣeka*, but *dīkṣā*, an ancient term for religious investiture in particular. The *abhiṣekas* are almost never called *dīkṣā*, except in what can be shown to be a specifically non-Buddhist context, including where that is unacknowledged copying from Śaivism (cf. below p.188 and p.298), and the much more modern ritual manuals of the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley (cf. MS *Dīkṣāvidhi* and 3 MSS *Dīkṣāvidhāna*, cited SANDERSON 1994:fn.38).

Unlike Tantric Buddhist *abhiṣeka*, Śaivite *dīkṣā* is supposed to be soteriologically sufficient, which means that at the very moment of initiation the bonds of worldly existence are severed

for ever. Only such imperfection as is required to see one to the end of one's inescapable natural life is allowed to remain. *Dīkṣā* liberates in and of itself.

The Buddhist tradition would not be expected to ascribe soteriological efficacy to a ritual, and it is certainly not the case that *abhiṣeka* liberates. Nevertheless, if the initiations were considered essential, the tradition must have been sensitive to the tension between Buddhist intentionality and partially mindless activity. That issue will come under the remit of our first question.

Another field of research which is parallel to the study of Indian Tantric Buddhism is the history of the same religion in Tibet. That history we will take into account. The main source of the previous section, the *Nayatrāyapradīpa* of Tripiṭakamāla, illustrates how it is directly relevant to our questions because of the survival of Indian texts only in their Tibetan translations. But the indigenous Tibetan tradition is also less circumstantially implicated, since royalty and clergy in that country directly tackled the same apologetic issues which will occupy us here.

Before turning to the nitty-gritty of our three specific questions, the time has come to define the three terms which will appear in the three possible combinations, notwithstanding the fact that a primary tactic of our authors will be shown to be the redefinition of words which appeared to have a self-evident reference. This is what the historical Buddha himself did, invalidating the conventional reference of *brāhmaṇa*, for example, to ascribed status, those born into a particular caste, and redefining it as referring to an achieved status of spiritual excellence (cf. *Sonadanda Sutta* (DN i.111ff.), *Vasettha Sutta* (Sutta Nipāta 115ff., vv.494–656); and for what makes the 'true outcaste' *Vasala Sutta* (Sutta Nipāta 21ff., vv.116–142) and 'true sacrifice' *Kutadanta Sutta* (DN i.127ff.)).

I have already written about what Tantric Buddhism can refer to in general, and how its reference is bounded for the present

study (cf. above p.15 and p.70). Thus, the Vajrayāna, Mantranaya or Mantramahāyāna, came to include four or five major groups of Tantra types. These represent a progression from ritual as little more than an instrumental accessory to meditative practice, through to ritual as itself equated to meditation and a means to salvation, initially exemplified by the Yogatantra *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*. As I also explained above, the definition of Tantric Buddhism we are using for our study of the sexual initiations, as a special instance of ritual and antinomian activity normalised as means to enlightenment, is somewhat circular, since it is simply the classes of Tantras which include those same initiations.

The eventually orthodox set of initiations is first taught in the *Guhyasamāja*. This was initially classed as a Yogatantra and continued to be so, although it was also different enough from the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* quickly to merit a class of its own, as a *Mahāyogatantra*, and was in addition classed as a *Yogottara* (Higher Yoga) Tantra. By the time of the *Yoginī/Yoganiruttara* highest class of tantras the sexual initiations are fully accepted as indispensable to a student's progress on the path, although this indispensability is qualified in various ways, as we shall see.

Besides the initiations the *Guhyasamāja* teaches techniques of sexual yoga as a regular practice, but does not yet include as accoutrements of the deity many of the mortuary (*kāpālika*) elements which come to the fore in the *Yoginī* tantras and secondary literature of the *Guhyasamāja* itself. This may suggest that the sexual elements do not necessarily depend on Śaivite models, marked especially by such *kāpālika* symbolism. At all events, Tantric Buddhism for us, with our interest in the initiations, will be confined to *Yoga* (the *Guhyasamāja*, but not the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*) and *Yoginī* tantras, and the mass of their ancillary texts.

Four Initiations

How then are the initiations described? A famous verse in the *Samājottara*, a later text which was to be incorporated as the final chapter (18) of the *Guhyasamāja*, lists what were to become thereafter the standard group of four:

The first is the consecration of the vase (*kalāśābhīṣeka*), the second the secret initiation (*guhyābhīṣeka*), the third that of wisdom-knowledge (*prajñājñāna*) and the fourth (*caturtha*) is likewise that again.

(*kalāśābhīṣekaṃ prathamam dvitīyaṃ guhyābhīṣekataḥ prajñājñānaṃ tṛtīyaṃ tu caturtham tat punas tathā* GST 18.113c–f; the first seventeen chapters of the tantra have been translated into German (GÄNG 1988) but no translation of the eighteenth chapter has been published.)

Beginning at the end, this first ever mention of the ‘fourth’ initiation is notoriously cryptic. Harunaga ISAACSON has discussed the probable historical process whereby the set became a group of four, by analogy with many other such groupings in Tantric Buddhist texts (1997b). The above quoted verse is in fact incomplete without the first two *pādas* which state:

In this Tantra the initiations are fixed as three-fold.

(*abhīṣekaṃ tridhā bhinnam asmiṃs tantrē prakalpitaṃ*; GST 18.113a–b.)

Thus the matter is far from clear, for this single verse appears to contradict itself. The verse only defines three distinct kinds of *abhīṣeka*, because the third is to be done twice.

ISAACSON has shown how:

In the history of yoga and yoginītantra consecration ritual we have the familiar pattern of continuous upward expansion of an original set. (1997b:11–12)

The *Abhiṣekanirukti*, translated in the Appendix of this dissertation, is one of his major sources for the tradition's own avowed variety of positions regarding the fourth initiation. Those positions range from saying that it does not exist (in accordance with the overstrict application of the first part of the *Samājottara* verse cited here above), to describing it as a ritual repetition of the preceding rite (thus according with the apparent sense of the last part of the same *Samājottara* verse) and, finally, what became the standard orthodoxy, that it is a verbal initiation by the teacher and at the same time somehow represents the ultimate effect, whose cause was represented by the previous part, the *prajñājñā-nābhiṣeka*.

Although the variety of views regarding this fourth initiation do include prescribing sexual intercourse, i.e. the physical repetition of the preceding component, that was not the prevailing view, and so for us, with our interest in sexual initiation, they are of no concern here. ISAACSON's main hypothesis and conclusion are that in this case, as so often in the 'Indian intellectual tradition' (1997b:15), we see that exegesis of scripture, here the obscure *Samājottara* verse, is the 'prime motivating factor' (*ibid.*) in the historical development of practice. We will return to the final orthodox position concerning the relationship of the *prajñājñā-nābhiṣeka* to the fourth initiation in our analysis of the apologetic for that erotic ritual.

The first of the initiations is that of the vase (*kalasābhiṣeka*). This is in fact itself a collection of consecrations. The first of this set is usually that of water (*udaka/jalābhiṣeka*) and it concludes with that of the teacher (*ācāryābhiṣeka*), whereby one is entitled eventually to initiate others in turn. This collection of six or seven rituals was complete unto itself in the texts of Kriyā, Caryā and Yoga Tantras before the *Guhyasamāja*. Our *Samājottara* verse (GST 18.113) probably dates to the time when that group was

first assigned preliminary status, as preparation for the following three individual rites. The details of those minor or preparatory *abhiṣeka* are discussed by SNELLGROVE (1987:223–243) and in brief by Per KVAERNE (1975: 92–94) and SANDERSON (1994:88–89). The standard list is: [flower or garland (*mālā*)], water (*udaka/jala*), diadem (*mukuṭa*), *vajra*, bell (*ghaṇṭā*), name (*nāma*) and teacher (*ācārya*).

Since the members of that preliminary group are on the whole innocuous as far as proprieties and intimate relations are concerned, they will not delay us further in our study of sexual initiations. The one exception to this innocence is the late interpretation based on *Kālacakra* 5.112 whereby the *kalāśābhiṣeka*, which can also be translated as pot initiation, is

reinterpreted as the initiand's touching of the breasts, pot-like by Sanskrit (poetic) convention, of his female consort. (ISAACSON 1997b:15)

Following ISAACSON again (*ibid.*:10) we will not enter into the *Kālacakra* material in general, for it is in many ways idiosyncratic as well as late.

The components of the second initiation, the *guhyābhiṣeka*, are first found in chapter eight of the *Guhyasamāja*, where, however, it is a free-form free-standing ritual. In the *Samājottara* it is detailed as follows:

By means of [the union of] *vajra* (penis) and lotus (vagina) [the teacher] should gather in all the Vajra [Tathāgata]s and let them all descend into his heart, as vajras of body, speech and mind. Then he should emit them [as semen] via his *vajra* (penis) and let them fall into the student's mouth. This is the best initiation of all the Vajra [Tathāgata]s.

(*vajrapadmaprayogeṇa sarvavajrān samājayet
sarvāṃs tān hṛdaye pātya kāyavākcittavajrataḥ
utsṛjya vajramārgeṇa śiṣyavaktre nipātayet
idaṃ tat sarvavajrāṇām abhiṣekapadaṃ param.* GST 18.115cd–
117ab)

Thus the ritual begins with the intercourse of the teacher with a woman and culminates in the oral insemination of the initiate by his teacher, in what could be interpreted as a homosexual act, if not an expression of a homosexual identity. Such consumption of a bodily fluid is quite antithetical to Indian norms, according to which oral intercourse is utterly impure. This has in theory been true in most cultures, since man has long realised that it is not a valid method of insemination for procreation, and so contrary to the natural law that seed should not be sown on barren ground. Indian ritual fastidiousness additionally relocates the objection, grouping it with that to other impure substances, any sort of contact with which is prohibited. Tantric Buddhism, like Tantric Śaivism and so on, flagrantly contravenes this norm, insisting on the consumption of the full range of bodily products, such as the morning pill made of the *pañcāmṛta*.

The *Samājottara* passage describes what is happening as the physical transference of a decoction of all the Buddhas. They are first gathered in by the teacher in the course of his union with a woman, presumably initially drawn up from the sexual organs to the top of the head and then made to descend (cf. the description in the *Hevajrasekaprakriyā*:

He should make the assembly of Lord Sages who dwell in space enter his penis.

(*vyomasthaṃ munīndravṛndaṃ vajrāntargataṃ kṛtvā...* HeSePra p.15).)

Thereupon the student receives the ‘extract of all Buddhas’ orally, emitted by the teacher in the medium of semen.

One could easily interpret this act as a physical transference of Buddha qualities from the master to his pupil, biologically analogous to the transference of genetic qualities from father to son in procreation. Indeed, one might go further and say that that analogy is deliberately inverted by an action which is guaranteed not to lead to reproduction, the act of a non-breeder.

However, in many ritual manuals, the bodily fluid of the female (*śoṇita* to the man's *śukra*) is also to be taken. In Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Samkṣiptābhisekavidhi*, for example (one of the oldest manuals, and part of the *Guyasamāja* tradition), first the teacher drops his semen into the student's mouth, and then, the teacher's

consort (*tathatā*) too stands up, naked, and likewise places a drop of the 'honey' from inside her lotus [vagina] playfully in [the student's] lotus [mouth].

(*tathatāpy utthāya svanīrajāntarālāvasthaṃ makarabindum tadvānn aravindāntarālāmbare*¹ *nirambaradharaiva savilāsā niveśayet*. *SamĀbhVi* p.417)

Thus it is the combination of the two essences which is the seed of the student's transformation.

Similarly, although the original *Samājottara* verse could indeed be read as a prescription for *fellatio*, that is by no means the standard procedure of ritual manuals. In the same *Samkṣiptābhisekavidhi*, for example, before the consort's actions just described, the teacher

takes [his semen] from the [consort's] lotus with his ring-finger and thumb, and, without the student's seeing, drops it into the aperture, [mouth,] of his lotus face.

(*saroruhād uddhṛtyānāmāṅguṣṭhābhyām śiṣyadṛṣṭikarāgocaram tādānanāmbhoruhākāśe vimuñcet*. *SamĀbhVi* p.417)

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into the many variations on the procedures here described. Some are certainly more bizarre than others, including prescriptions for the apparently homosexual '*fellatio*'. Sometimes the teacher's consort is not required to offer her *śoṇita*; elsewhere the mingled fluids are scooped up in a leaf or other utensil, and so fed to the student. We are here interested in how this particular rite is explained, and will come shortly

1 aravindāntarālāmbare] corr.: ed. āravindāntarāle 'mbare

to the minimum explanation that Tantric commentators make. In anticipation, we may note that there is little specific apologetic regarding the *guhya* initiation, in contrast to some quite careful justification of the *prajñājñāna* initiation.

Returning to our primary source for an initial definition, a brief account of that *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* does follow the *guhya-bhīṣeka* in the *Samājottara*, although it is not identified by name. First the student (*sādhaka*) should give the teacher his ritual fee (*dakṣiṇā*), before asking for the latter's consort for himself in turn, whereupon he will receive her.

(*dakṣiṇā ca pradātavyā gurave sādhakena vai adhyeṣya guruṇā tasya dātavyā sādhakasya tu* GST 18.119).

The initiation is the subsequent union of the initiate with his consort, referred to obliquely in the following four verses (GST 18.120–123).

The next verses describe the *vidyāvratā*, a separate ritual like a *hieros gamos* or sacred marriage, binding the couple symbolically, and including a definite statement of the necessity of this union on the path to enlightenment:

The teacher, holder of the *vajra*, should take that same divine (*devatā*) consort (*vidyā*) and put her hand in the hand of the student, holder of the *vajra*. [He] should make all the Tathāgatas witnesses [to this divine marriage], and with his hand on the student's head says:

'Although all phenomena are [ultimately] free of duality, they are characterised by duality, wherefore there is no other means to Buddhahood [than] this best consort. That is why you should never be apart [from her for all of] *saṃsāra*. This is the highest *vidyā*-pledge of all the Buddhas. He who transgresses [this pledge] is a fool, and will not have the highest success, [enlightenment].'

(*tām eva devatām vidyām grhya śiṣyasya vajriṇaḥ pāṇau pāṇiḥ pradātavyaḥ sākṣīkrtya tathāgatān*

*hastam dattvā śiṣyaśirasya² ucyate guruvajriṇā
 nānyopāyena buddhatvaṃ tasmād vidyām imāṃ varām
 advayāḥ sarvadharmās tu dvayabhāvena lakṣitāḥ
 tasmād viyogaḥ saṃsāre na kāryo bhavatā sadā
 idaṃ tat sarvabuddhānāṃ vidyāvratam anuttamam
 atikramati yo mūḍhaḥ siddhis tasya na cottamā. GST 18.124–127)*

We have already moved in ritual time beyond the initiations on which our focus is directed, but the formulation of the *vidyāvrata* throws reflected light on those preceding rituals. It normalises the relationship between the student and his consort, enacting a formal permanent commitment to each other, like the formulaic Anglican ‘Til death us do part’. And the words of the officiating teacher do give an elliptical explanation of this ritual union.

Elements only appear to be distinct; they do not really have any separate identity (*svabhāva*). This is true not only for objects such as a chair or chariot, but equally so for the human being. The *Samājottara* verses conclude that that is why one must dwell in union with a consort, for there is no other means to enlightenment. The unelaborated middle step in the argument must be that in the union of two people, albeit here only explicitly a symbolic joining, one realises the lack of individual essence in all phenomenal reality. The physical union of the third initiation could then presumably have an analogical function, though that is not stated.

Tantric Buddhism and Women

Before we proceed to the details of our first question, whether sexual initiation is required in Tantric Buddhism, with its sub-question of why such ritual should be necessary, let us consider a

2 śiṣyaśirasi] read with MATSUNAGA B, T, T7, T9: MATSUNAGA ed. śire śiṣyam. The reading chosen may make better sense grammatically (and śire must have been an error for śire in the edition), but the correction may be not necessary given the style of scriptural Sanskrit.

different parallel claim. That is the blanket assertion of a Yoginī-/Yoganiruttara tantra, the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa*, that enlightenment cannot be won without a woman. The tenth chapter of that scripture is called ‘In Praise of Woman’ (*strīpraśamsā*; I am very grateful to Harunaga ISAACSON for supplying me with his unpublished 1996 edition of this part of the text, together with the commentary of Mahāsukhavajrapāda, the *Padmāvatī*). We referred to this same chapter above for its account of Śākyamuni Buddha’s own enlightenment through erotic bliss (cf. above p.73ff.).

The chapter begins with Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa’s divine consort asking him:

Lord, is the state [of being] Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa attainable without a woman, or not?

to which he replies:

It is not, Goddess.

(*atha bhagavaty āha— kiṃ bhagavan strīvyatirekeṇāpi śakyate sādhyatūṃ caṇḍamahāroṣaṇapadam utāho na śakyate? bhagavān āha—na śakyate devi.* CMT X.intro)

The goddess rephrases her question, asking:

Lord, is it because there is no arising of pleasure [without a woman] that it is not [attain]able?

(*bhagavaty āha— kiṃ bhagavan sukhānudayān na śakyate?* ibid. ctd.)

Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa’s lengthy verse response explains the kind of pleasure essential for enlightenment, how that cannot be generated without a female partner, and so why women are always to be venerated:

The Lord said: ‘The highest Awakening is not reached by the arising of pleasure alone. It is obtained only by the arising of a

special [type of] pleasure, and in no other way. Moreover, that effect [i.e. pleasure] can in way (*naiva*) arise without a cause, of course (*eva*). That cause, indeed, is union (*yoga*) with a woman; nor can there ever be any other [cause]. The illusion which is woman is lauded [alone] of all illusions. He who neglects her will find no success. Therefore one should never not be in union with a woman. If thus, [in union with a woman,] there should be suffering or death, imprisonment [or] danger, any such [difficulty] can be borne, but one should not abandon a woman, because every woman [can] help one attain buddhahood by means of pleasure. Women are shameless, fickle, provocative [and] always obsessed with desire. [Yet] they grant success, [if] honoured with all one's being.'

(*bhagavān āha-*
na sukhodayamātreṇa labhyate bodhir uttamā
sukhaviśeṣodayād eva prāpyate sā ca nānyathā.
tac ca kāryaṃ vinā naiva kāraṇenaiva jāyate
kāraṇaṃ ca striyā yogo na cānyo hi kadācana.
sarvāsām eva māyānām strīmāyaiva praśasyate
tām evātikramed yo 'sau na siddhiṃ so 'dhigacchati.
tasmān na strīviyogo 'yaṃ kartavyas tu kadācana;
evam yadi bhaved duḥkhaṃ mṛtyur vā bandhanaṃ bhayaṃ
sahyaṃ tat sarvaṃ evedaṃ striyaṃ naiva tu saṃtyajet
yasmād eva striyaḥ sarvāḥ sukhair buddhatvaprapīkāḥ.
nirlajjāś cañcalā dhr̥ṣṭā nityaṃ kāmāparāyaṇāḥ
siddhiṃ etā dadanty³ eva sarvabhāvena sevītāḥ. *ibid.* ctd. vvi–6)

Mahāsukhavajrapada glosses the two compounds of the first verse as follows:

'By the arising of pleasure alone' means by means of the ordinary [pleasure] produced by viewing plays and so on. 'A special [type of] pleasure' refers to the four [erotically generated] blisses; this [pleasure] arising is it becoming manifest, [and this is in the ablative of cause: i.e.] by that. Therefore it is agreed by proponents of

3 correct Sanskrit: dadati

every view that of all pleasures the one associated with a woman is the best.

(*sukhodayamātreṇeti sādharmaṇena nāṭakādidarśanajanitena. sukhaviśeṣodayād iti sukhaviśeṣaś caturānandalakṣaṇaḥ, tasyodayaḥ prādurbhāvas tasmāt. ata eva sarvasukhānām madhye strīṇam eva sukhaṁ paramam iti sarvavādisiddham. Padmāvatī ad loc.*)

The commentary simply makes more explicit the sexual nature of the relationship one must have with a woman which is the only way to generate the pleasure which is the four blisses (*ānanda*) and so win enlightenment. The contrast drawn with the mundane enjoyment of drama reveals the potential for confounding varieties of aesthetic experience (cf. my paper, ONIANS forthcoming). The scripture itself is extremely close in places to the words spoken by the teacher in the *vidyāvratā*, quoted above from the *Guhyasamāja*. One should never abandon one's woman. What makes her indispensable is that she is the only praiseworthy (or illuminating) illusion.

The following verses (7–14) dictate the mutual worship of the couple (*anyonyaṁ bhavet pūjā*; CMT X.9c), who are to perceive each other as deities (*strīṇām ca pumān devo devatā strī narasya hi*; CMT X.9ab). Then comes a passage which I feel bound to quote, even if we shall not here discuss the details:

[The yogin] should worship [his woman] with all his being, [but] in such a way that wicked [non-mantranayins] do not realise [what his esoteric practice is]. Let him never reject [his] woman, [now that] he has heard this pronouncement of the Buddha. That sinner who does otherwise [than this worship of woman], will achieve hell. Otherwise death too is guaranteed (*siddham*). What use is separation from a woman? It is impossible to realise [one's identity with] Caṇḍaroṣaṇa by means of austerities. It is fruitless to bind a spotless mind in the net of delusion. The lover (*kāmin*) must not avoid love (*kāma*). [That would] generate [the fault] of wrong livelihood [or hypocrisy] (*mithyājīva*). Through wrong

livelihood the guilty party [acquires] demerit (*pāpa*), through demerit he acquires at the moment of death rebirth in a hell. This is certain.

Thus, the [spiritual] sons of the Conquerors win success through desire (*kāma*) itself. So one should not abandon the five [objects of] desire (*kāma[guṇa]*) and torment oneself with austerities. One should look at all the forms that come one's way, and listen to every sound; one should smell smells, and taste the best flavour; one should feel tactile objects: [this is] the service to the five [objects of] desire (*pañcakāmopasevana*). [He who does this] will very quickly become Enlightened, [because] intent on Caṇḍaroṣa alone. There is no deceit greater, nor worse delusion, than that the whole time of being active and young, the pleasure of woman is not enjoyed.

*(vandayet sarvabhāvena yathā duṣṭo na budhyate
tyajen naiva striyaṃ kvāpi śrutvedaṃ buddhabhāṣitam.
anyathātvam kared yas tu sa pāpī narakam aśnute
maraṇam apy anyathā siddham strīviyogena kiṃ kṛtam.
tapasā sidhyate naiva caṇḍaroṣaṇasādhanaṃ
niṣphalaṃ mohajālena bādhyate nirmalaṃ manaḥ.
kāmaṃ na varjayet kāmī mithyājīvas tu jāyate
mithyayā jīvanāt pāpaṃ pāpāt tu narake gatim
labhate 'ntakāle tu mithyājīvī na saṃśayaḥ.
ata eva sādhyate siddhiḥ kāmēnaiva jinātmañjariḥ
pañcakāmāṃs tathā tyaktvā tapasātmānaṃ na pīḍayet.
rūpaṃ paśyed yathālabdhaṃ śṛṇuyāt śabdā eva ca
gandhasya jighrāṇaṃ kuryād bhakṣayed rasam uttamam.
sparśasya sparśanaṃ kuryāt pañcakāmopasevanam
bhavet śighrataraṃ buddhaś caṇḍaroṣaikatatparaḥ.
nātaḥ paraṃ vañcanāsti na ca moho 'py ataḥ paraṃ
mānuṣyaṃ yauvanaṃ sarvaṃ strīśukhaṃ nopabhogitam. CMT
X.15–22)*

It is at this point that Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa recounts the true story of the Buddha's own erotic path to enlightenment, and why he dissembled, for the sake of the muddled masses (CMT X.25–30;

cf. above p.73f.). In fact, all people are one, and that is one with the Buddha and his consort. In order to realise that unity one must join with a consort and enact the fusing of wisdom and means, the two-fold nature which obtains simultaneously with universal unity.

(*bhagavān āha—
māyādevīsutaś cāhaṃ caṇḍaroṣaṇatām gataḥ
tvam eva bhagavatī gopā prajñāpāramitātmikā.
yāvantas tu striyaḥ sarvās tvadrūpeṇaiva tā matāḥ
madrūpeṇa ca pūṃsas tu sarva eva prakīrtitāḥ
dvidhābhāvagataṃ caitat prajñopāyātmakam jagat. CMT X.31–
32*).

The fact remains that early Buddhism, the Śrāvakayāna, accuses and abuses women, and the goddess asks Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa why this should be (*atha bhagavaty āha—katham bhāgavan śrāvakādayo hi striyaṃ dūṣayanti?* ibid. ctd.). The Lord explains:

All the Śrāvakas and [Pratyekabuddhas] who [you] have mentioned live in the Realm of Desire. [Yet though] they see women all the time, they do not recognise [them to be the real] path to liberation, Where saffron and [other luxuries] are near at hand and easily available, they are not valued. The remote is precious. Those people have no faith, because of their beginningless involvement with ignorance. They do not apply their minds to the Truth. Indeed I have concealed it. Nonetheless, [even] now in the Kali Age a man in a million, a being reckoned as singular, is committed to faith and effort; for his sake [I] have [here finally] taught everything, so that he can quickly attain Enlightenment.

(*bhagavān āha—
kāmadhātusthitāḥ sarve khyātā ye śrāvakādayaḥ
mokṣamārgam na jñānti striyaṃ paśyanti sarvadā.
saṃnidhānam bhaved yatra sulabham kuṅkumādikam
na tatārgham samāpnoti dūrasthasya mahārghatā.
anādyajñānayogena śraddhāhīnās tv amī janāḥ*

*cittam na kurvate tattve mayāpy etat pragopitam.
tathāpy atra kalau kālē koṭimadhye 'tha kaścana
ekaikasamkhyātāḥ sattvaḥ śraddhāyatnaparāyaṇaḥ
tasyārthe bhāṣitaṃ sarvaṃ śīghrabodhiprasiddhaye.* CMT X.33–
36)

Admittedly, these passages are part of a *Yoginī* tantra which is somewhat notorious even in comparison to its peers for its forthright attitudes to bodily functions and so on. Yet such plainness of speaking can be conducive to understanding, particularly in our case where the communication is obstructed by a great distance in both space and time. I think we have got the message, that woman is indispensable to men on the Tantric way. The sexual initiations will be the special instance subjects of a case-study of woman's rôle as partner to a male practitioner. One might say that the woman is a necessary if not sufficient condition to enlightenment; she is essential to the male aspirant, but is probably by herself not sufficient means for winning the highest prize.

We will follow the tradition in paying scarcely any attention to the alternative scenario, that a woman is the initiand, with a man as her supporting actor (although cf. 'A woman who adopts this observance must be visualised as Nairātmyā...' *Kriyāsamuccaya* of Darpaṇācārya, transl. SANDERSON 1994:90). Indeed, one could pose a separate question in this context, why the literature of this tradition is so male-oriented, but that forms part of a truly enormous enquiry into the greater part of the history of literate cultures. In short, the response of evolutionary biology would be that man is incessantly advertising his genetic strengths and virtues to woman, and that he does this through textual traditions, for example. Woman is thus the paradigmatic consumer, making her selection of a producer-mate on the basis of his products on the cultural shelf. Never mind that much of the time those same products are designed and used to bludgeon her into submission.

As I said, that would be a separate question. However, we

should also refer in this regard to Miranda SHAW's book, 'Passionate Enlightenment', subtitled 'Women in Tantric Buddhism'. SHAW's mission is a feminist one, to present

extensive new evidence of the outspoken and independent female founders of the Tantric movement and their creative role in shaping its distinctive vision of gender relations and sacred sexuality. (SHAW 1998:cover blurb).

The major problem with her method is the self-announced 'application of creative hermeneutical strategies' (1998:13), which inspires SHAW first to interpret passages in order to allow certain possibilities, only eventually to represent them as historical facts, previously suppressed.

Whatever the shortcomings of SHAW's analysis, it is true that there are many intriguing unanswered questions about the role of women in Tantric practice. One of my own first questions about the sexual initiations was from where the women came or were obtained. SHAW criticizes a long list of secondary authors who have depicted

the Tantric yoginis in derogatory, even contemptuous, terms, calling them

'passive counterparts' who are 'employed,' 'available,' and used as a 'ritual object'. (1998:7)

Yet the only text I am aware of which talks at all realistically about how to procure a partner portrays a practitioner perhaps even more cynical than what SHAW condemns as the libellous consensus of male white commentators.

The source for this teaching of blatant dissimulation as a means to acquire an uninitiated woman is the *Guhyasiddhi* of Padmavajra (aka Saroruhavajra), to whom Benoytoshā BHATTACHARYA attributes the date of 693 AD (in the introduction to his *Sādhanaṁālā*; cited in *Guhyādi-Aṣṭasiddhi-Saṅgraha* p.6). The *Guhyasiddhi*

is a text in the *Guhyasamāja* tradition, consisting of nine chapters which teach the *sādhana* (practice) of a Tantric practitioner in that school. Our passage is found at the beginning of the eighth chapter, following closely on from the preceding brief section on the Pledge of the Consort (*vidyāvratānirdeśa*; GuSi p.50–52).

There the yogi has been told to obtain the best consort, a divine one (*prāpya mudrāṃ parāṃ divyāṃ*; GuSi 7.1a), with the alternative proviso that:

If he cannot draw divine women to him, and is tormented by desire, then he should devote himself to a human female.

(*yadi vātha na śaknoti ākraṣṭuṃ⁴ divyayoṣitaḥ⁵*
pīḍyate caiva kāmēna tadā seveta mānuṣīm. GuSi 7.8).

This verse seems to relegate relations with real women to the less skilful practitioner, a debate to which we shall return (cf. ‘Are monks eligible for sexual initiation?’ below), but more tellingly it implies that such practice is particularly appropriate for one who is uncomfortably passionate. One could deduce either that a prevalence of desire precludes the cool procurement of a heavenly lady, or that the *vidyāvrata* is *per se* designed for the transformation of those suffering in the fires of love. Again it is said:

But in the absence of divine women for the winning of divine success he should devote himself to a human girl, fit for all tantric ritual.

(*tathāpy⁶ abhāve divyānāṃ divyasiddhyarthahetave*
seveta mānuṣīm kanyāṃ tantrasarvakriyānugām⁷. GuSi 7.11).

The author goes on to

list those ordinary consorts in order, beginning with the outcaste, by means of whom success is won. An outcaste, sister, mother,

4 ākraṣṭuṃ] corr. ed.: MSS ed. ākraṣṭā

5 divyayoṣitaḥ] corr. ed.: MSS ed. divyayoṣitām

6 tathāpy] em.: ed. athāpy

7 tantrasarvakriyānugām] corr.: ed. tatra sarvakriyānugām

daughter, or dyerwoman, or some other born in a despicable family are easily obtained.

(*tās tu mudrāḥ pravakṣyāmi sāmānyās tu krameṇa tu
antya-jām āditaḥ kṛtvā yābhiḥ siddhir avāpyate.
antya-jā bhaginī mātā duhitṛī rañjakī tathā
jugupsākulasambhūtā cānyā vā labhyate sukhaiḥ.* GuSi 7.13–14)

This last *pāda* might betray the pragmatic motivation for enrolling a woman of the class of undesirables or a family member for one's sexual practices, namely that they are conveniently accessible, either because of a lack of social or ritual pretensions or by being in one's intimate environment already. Such an interpretation would belie the expected rationale that congress with these women is preferred precisely because it is conventionally outlawed, the mode that we have called antinomianism as a norm. Indeed, our thesis stands, for they are only easy to get hold of in contrast to the elusive divine ladies.

The eighth chapter opens with a strikingly realistic method for coming by an outcaste woman:

I shall now teach how surely to achieve that greatly marvellous procurement (*sādhana*) of the outcaste woman which has been taught in the tantra. One should renounce the restraints (*avadhi*) of birth, take on the [Śaivite] appearance of [Gaṇeśa], the lord of [Śiva's] troupe, and enter foreign lands where one is completely unknown. One should take up the [sect] marks of [one of Śiva's] gang, shave one's head and wear a single topknot, thick in the form of a dreadlock. Round one's neck one should wear a necklace, of *rudrākṣa* [berries] and divine crystal [beads] mixed together, which hangs down in the lower part; [one should wear] a divine armlet and bracelet, full of dense sparkles; one should make carefully the three line forehead mark [and wear] a copper ring on the forefinger. And next he should put on a loincloth with a bit hanging down in front; and attached to his shoulder a box completely made of iron. With the appearance of the lord

of [Śiva's] troupe, all his limbs adorned, he should disguise his retreat and enter an outcaste village.

(*yaduktam sādhanam tanre antyajāyā*⁸ *mahādbhūtam*
atas tam sampravakṣyāmi yathā samprāpyate dṛḍham
janmāvadhiṃ parityajya kṛtvā rūpaṃ gaṇeśvaram
praviśya cānyadeśeṣu yatra na jñāyate kvacit
gaṇaliṅgaṃ samādhāya muṇḍayitvā tu mastakam
dhārayitvā śikhāṃ ekāṃ sthūlāṃ ekajaṭākṛtim
rūdrākṣaiḥ sphaṭikair divyaiḥ parasparavimīṣitam
vidhāya kaṇṭhikāṃ kaṇṭhe adhobhāge vilambinīm
*keyūraṅkaṇaṃ*⁹ *divyaṃ sphuliṅgagahanākulam*
kṛtvā tripuṇḍrakam yatnāt tarjanyāṃ tāmramudrikāṃ
*kaupīnaṃ ca tato dhāryaṃ puratobhāgalambakam*¹⁰
*skandhāvalambitaṃ kṛtvā karaṇḍam sarvalohakam*¹¹
kakṣāvagunṭhanam kṛtvā praviśed antyajālayam. GuSi 8.1–7)

Once he has thus made this divine disguise for the sake of success he should wander about in holy places where he is completely unknown. And he should go amongst outcastes and so forth who out of their devotion to [Śiva,] the destroyer of the triple city, acknowledge the true [existence] of no other deity. Practitioners of the [Śaiva] *siddhānta*, they always delight in ritual ablution and worship of [their] god. They are devoted to the system of the scriptures, although with only a little learning. Thus [prepared], the practitioner should be firm in his resolve and enter into their midst, mentally cultivating the [true] highest enlightenment, [though] in the outcaste form of a devotee [of Śiva]. Then he should teach them religion (*dharma*) according to their tradition (*siddhānta*) as established in the *Kālottara* and other [texts,] or otherwise as found in the *Niśvāsa*. [This is done] in order to make all of them, inspired by [their] tantras, have faith [in him],

8 antyajāyā] corr. ed.: MSS antaja

9 keyūraṅkaṇaṃ] corr.: ed. keyūram kaṅkaṇam

10 puratobhāgalambakam] corr.: ed. purato bhāgalambakam

11 sarvalohakam] corr.: ed. corr. ca salohakam

[so] he can make them his students, preceded by the maṇḍala of initiation (*dīkṣā*). Next they will pile up their possessions and give them as an act of worship to their teacher, but he should restore that to them together with previously [given] goods. [Instead] he should take one of their girls, lovely of face and fair of eye, [and] make her understand the Tantric reality [and] approve of the pledges. The wise [practitioner], intent on Buddhahood, can then practise the Vidyāvratā. He will succeed in this very life, assuredly, [and] by means of the pledges taught in the tantras.

(*evam kṛtvā tu taṃ divyaṃ suguptaṃ siddhihetave
paryateḍ divyadeśeṣu yatra na jñāyate kvacit
praviśya cāntyajādīnāṃ madhye ye tripurāntake
bhaktyā jānanti naivānyaṃ daivataṃ paramārthataḥ
siddhānte*¹² *bhāvitā nityaṃ snānadevārcane ratāḥ
kiñcid akṣaramārgeṇa prasaktāḥ*¹³ *śāstradarśane
evaṃ praviśya tanmadhye sādḥako dṛḍhaniścayaḥ
caṇḍālaganarūpeṇa bhāvayan bodhim uttamāṃ
darśayec ca tatas teṣāṃ dharmāṃ siddhāntapūrvakam
kālotarādisamsiddham*¹⁴ *no cen niḥśvāsasambhavam
pātayitum ca niśvāse sarvāṃs tān tantracoditān
kṛtvā caivātmanaḥ śiṣyān dīkṣāmaṇḍalapūrvakam
tato yat saṃcitaṃ dravyaṃ tair dattaṃ gurupūjane
tat teṣāṃ arpayitvā tu pūrvam vittena saṃyutam
grhītvā kanyakāṃ teṣāṃ cāruvaktrāṃ sulocanām
tāṃ kṛtvā tantrasadbhāvābhijñāṃ*¹⁵ *saṃayasammatām
cared vidyāvratāṃ dhīmān buddhatvakṛtaniścayaḥ
siddhyate janmanīhaiva tantroktaiḥ samayair dṛḍham.* GuSi 8.8–
16)

Thus here we have a detailed Buddhist recipe for the acquisition of a female to share an ascetic's practice, one which prescribes

12 siddhānte] conj. w. Tib. rang gi grub mtha': ed. siddhyante

13 prasaktāḥ] corr.: ed. prasakte

14 kālotarasamsiddham] corr.: ed. kālotarasamsuddham

15 tantrasadbhāvābhijñāṃ] corr. w. Tib. rgyud don bden pa la mkhas shing:
ed. mantrasadbhāvābhijñāṃ

disguise and the disingenuous performance of Śaivite ritual, dependent on fairly profound familiarity with Śaivite scriptures. Although there must have been more than one accepted method for finding a partner, our source has an air of verisimilitude, by virtue of its lack of pretence to righteousness. It is equally true that the hagiographies of the Mahāsiddhas present many stories of men apprenticing themselves to women, but nevertheless it cannot be unequivocally asserted that on this subject

the claims of Western scholars have consistently diverged from those of Indian scholars, Indian practitioners, and Western scholar-practitioners,

or that the words translated above, for example, merely

betray the legacy of colonial contempt for the cultural values of other people. (SHAW 1998:196).

SHAW concludes her best-seller by remarking:

The claim that male Tantrics were ruthless seducers amounts to a contention that a major Buddhist tradition has functioned primarily as a tool of exploitation and oppression. In this view, Tantric Buddhism has served as a tool to construct and solidify male selves as predatory self-serving manipulators, acting under unchecked selfish motivations, while representing a social force of degredation, denigration and suffering. (1998:204)

Her conclusion is based on the claim she finds made in unspecified secondary sources that Tantric Buddhist practitioners were 'ruthless seducers'. In contrast, we have now seen some primary evidence for a claim of that sort, but would not want to draw broad conclusions about manipulation and degradation. After all, as we have seen above (p.24f.), it is central to Mahāyāna ethics that skilful means can and should take the most unlikely forms. These include the breaking of conventional and specialised rules of conduct, just as is entailed by the kidnap and exploitation

of an unwitting consort described in the *Guhyasiddhi*. Miranda SHAW is herself a modern Tantric Buddhist apologist, positing an idealised, self-professedly gynocentric system.

Monasticism and Celibacy

Not for the first time, it should be emphasised that differing rules apply according to whether one is a monk or a man-in-the-world. In the whole *Guhyasiddhi* there is no reference at all to practitioners resident in monastic institutions. Rather its ideal actor is an ascetic, living in cave or forest and coming to town on the alms round or to act crazy and so perform their demonic practice.

(*unmattarūpam āsthāya maunībhūtvā samāhitah
svādhidaivatayogātmā paryaṭet tu piśācavat* GuSi 6.13).

Even a householder will find success (*grhe 'pi sidhyate*; GuSi 6.98c), in the case that he cannot, for some reason, abandon his home for extended periods (*yadi vātha na śaknoti tyaktum veśma suvistaram*; GuSi 6.92cd). However, such a candidate must not publicise his practice, but should conform to the conventions of society, lest there be trouble.

(*samayān guptam ācāret
lokācāraikaniṣṭhas tu yathā bhedo na jāyate* GuSi 6.93d–94b).

Only at night can he throw off his disguise (*rātrau tu prakāto bhūtvā*; GuSi 6.94c). But further discussion of this evidence for extra-monastic practitioners will have to wait until the final of our three questions.

For us the members of religious institutions are of particular interest, because of the extra discipline to which they have signed up. Although those controls (such as antisocial celibacy and non-production of food etc.) may themselves flout lay norms, they are then transgressed in their turn in practices which in this sense

are doubly antinomian. Before we return to the actual status of the initiate, we will examine our first question, whether in Tantric Buddhism the sexual initiations are part of a breaking of rules that is a *sine qua non* on the path— strong antinomianism— or not— weak antinomianism merely allowing transgression with impunity.

As might be expected from the etymology of the English term (monk < Gk *monachos* < *monos* alone; cf. OED s.v.), celibacy should be prominent within any definition of monasticism, albeit the ‘aloneness’ here probably refers in the first place to psychological independence from society, just like the going forth from home into homelessness of a Buddhist monk (*anagāriyaṃ pabbajana*). Although I have heard a Catholic priest explaining on the radio that celibacy refers in his case to non-marriage, i.e. bachelorhood, monks are in fact married to the Church (*Ecclesia* fem.). For a Catholic nun the situation is slightly different, since she is married to a male, a bride of Christ. She is pledged to be faithful to her husband, monogamous and avoiding adultery, though one could argue that Christ is polygamous with all his nuns. Thus neither definition, of Catholic monk or nun, is formulated in terms of the exclusion of passion. Similarly, the enforced celibacy of the clergy in England, for example, did not begin until the turn of the twelfth century, after the Conquest (cf. Strong 1996:60; coincidentally just a little later than the reforming edict of lHa bla ma ye shes ‘od to which we will return below p.253).

The etymology of the Sanskrit term (*bhikṣu* from the root *bhikṣ* to beg; cf. Eng. mendicant) does not allow one to make such a prediction of singlestatus. Begging defines a status in opposition to that of a householder who grows, herds or gathers his own sustenance. Yet it is not just the name which makes the monk, but his rules of behaviour. In the Pāli Theravāda version of the Vinaya, the 227 *pātimokkha* (*prātimokṣa*) rules of a monk are

each set within a frame story of what occasioned the Buddha's regulatory pronouncement.

The whole complex system begins in the *Suttavibhaṅga* with the story of Sudinna (SV i.5.1–11, Vin iii.10–21; the *Mahā* and *Culla Vaggas*, which in PTS publications precede the *Suttavibhaṅga* in the *Vinayapīṭaka*, are probably historically later narratives of the Buddha's life-story). He was a monk who was prevailed upon by his mother to please sleep one last time with his abandoned former wife:

Dear Sudinna, give your seed, lest the Licchavis harvest our property without an heir.

(*tena hi tāta Sudinna bījakaṃ pi dehi, mā no aputtakaṃ sāpateyyaṃ Licchaviyo atiharāpesun ti*. SV i.5.8, Vin. iii.18).

He could

not see the danger, since the rules of discipline had not [yet] been promulgated.

(*apaññatte sikkhāpade anādīnavadaso*; *ibid.*)

As the Buddha puts it when informed of what has been done:

Foolish man! It would have been better for you to thrust your distinguishing member in the mouth of a dreadful and poisonous snake, [or a black snake, or a fire pit], than in the distinguishing member of a woman.

(*varan te moghapurisa āsīvisassa ghoravisassa mukhe aṅgajātaṃ pakkhittaṃ na tv eva mātugāmassa aṅgajāte aṅgajātaṃ pakkhittaṃ*. SV i.5.11, Vin. iii.20).

The former would merely bring about death or suffering like unto death, but the latter brings after death rebirth in hell (*ibid.*).

Had Sudinna not been immune by being the first offender, his well-intentioned action would have brought about his 'defeat', which has often been understood to entail expulsion from the order, through committing a *pārājika* offence. More to the point

of our definition of monasticism, the tradition presents Sudinna's mistake as the prime factor prompting Śākyamuni to teach all the following *sikkhāpada*, or rules of discipline.

(*tena hi bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ sikkhapādaṃ paññāpessāmi*. SV 1.5.11, Vin III.21).

So it is *abrahmacarya*, or the fault of non-celibacy, which is not only the first for a monk to avoid but was allegedly the first fault to be highlighted by the Buddha.

As we noted above ('Buddhist Core Morality'), the layman's five or eight, and a novice's ten *sikkhāpadas* begin instead with the avoidance of killing, followed by stealing, and only then sexual misconduct. After all, these people were not expected to be celibate; the restraint lies rather in not taking another man's wife. The four *pārājikas* of a monk are non-celibacy, stealing, killing (including causing someone to commit suicide through despair), and gossiping about supernatural powers. The third can be identified as an ancient opposite to the Mahāyāna ethic of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* discussed above (p.24), whereby a Bodhisattva is to allow himself to be seduced by a besotted woman, if she were otherwise to be driven to self-destruction.

The contemporary scholarly orthodoxy is that differences between Buddhist schools are defined by separate *pātimokkha* recitals at separate *uposatha* ceremonies, creating distinct Nikāyas or ordination traditions, possibly based on an initial disagreement over a point of Vinaya. Thus the 18 Śrāvakayāna schools (Nikāyas) may well have had differentiated doctrine but it is their Vinaya lineages which distinguish them. This ancient notion, together with the earlier Vinayas, is carried over to the Mahāyāna and even the Mantranaya. Tibetan Buddhist monks, for example, however Tantric their theory and practices, follow to this day the Śrāvakayāna Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya. Another prevailing idea has been that Buddhism could or should itself be characterised by

monasticism as the virtuoso pursuit of institutionalised professionals. This is the kind of issue with which we will be concerned under our third question when we consider the relationship between Tantric Buddhism and monasticism.

For now, we have already seen some strong statements that a man needs a woman for Tantric success. That would seem already to preclude monastics. However, we have yet to investigate fully the precise rules and regulations regarding a particular scene in which woman must act her part, sexual initiation, and its relationship to the religion.

Is Sexual Initiation Required in Tantric Buddhism?

The real interest of this question whether the sexual initiations are essential to a Tantric practitioner is to decipher why or how they are understood to be indispensable, when that strong claim is made. It will not be possible to satisfy this interest without answering our second question. Although that question's phrasing refers simply to their eligibility for these initiations, the answer will clarify whether, and in detail why or how, such a requirement applies equally to monastic candidates. It is one thing for erotic rites to be a necessary component of a layman's path, but a more pervasive (if not catholic) phenomenon if monks are also compelled to be sexually active. Moreover, the formulation of our third question draws attention to the possibility that for some authorities members of the Saṅgha may indeed be the primary if not the only intended initiands. In asking now whether the initiations are a *sine qua non* in Tantric Buddhism, the answer will specify what entitlements they bestow.

To avoid a distracting *embarras* of terms such as 'sexual' or 'erotic' I will also refer to our initiations as 'higher'. The group of four defined above does indeed form a higher classification in relation to the antecedent group of six or seven which came to make up the first member of the group of four, collectively called the vase initiation. After all, we have already defined the Tantric Buddhism with which we are concerned as that of the Higher Tantras, where these are in turn circularly defined as the Tantras which include our higher initiations and, most important of all, offer enlightenment. The higher initiations will refer normally to the second and third, on which we are concentrating, the pair one might otherwise describe as sexual or erotic. Their performance has been outlined above, without going into the many explicit passages. The fourth cannot be completely excluded because it is so closely related to the third, but it is itself innocuous and so

requires no independent apologetic for antinomianism.

There is one common brief explanation of what the higher initiations bring about. Most sources agree that the Secret (*guhya*) Initiation, the second initiation, with its tasting of semen, is believed to bring about the purification of speech, just as the previous package, with its providing of physical accoutrements, had purified the body. Unsurprisingly, the exegesis follows the structure of a standard Buddhist triad, and so the third initiation is said to purify the mind. One of the oldest surviving all-purpose ritual manuals, the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* of Kuladatta, has it thus:

The vase initiation purifies the body....After his vajra of speech has been purified by the secret initiation, [the initiand] should ask [for the wisdom-knowledge initiation] in order to purify his vajra of mind.

(*kalasābhīṣeṣeṇa kāyaviśodhanam. . . guhyābhīṣeṣeṇa vāgvajraṃ viśodhya, cittavajraviśodhanārthaṃ prārthayet. KriSaṃPañ 512*).

This text also offers the interesting detail that when the teacher initially has intercourse himself it may be

with his own consort that the student offers, or equally with some other available girl, lovely of form and youth.

(*svamudrāṃ vā śiṣyasamarpitāṃ anyāṃ¹ vā yathālabdhāṃ rūpayauvanamaṇḍitaṃ prāpya. ibid.*)

It tells that the student is to be blindfolded before the teacher places some of his own semen in the student's mouth, using his ring-finger and thumb as utensils.

(*śiṣyasya mukhaṃ baddhvānāmikāṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ bodhicittaṃ śiṣyavaktre dadyāt. ibid.*)

In general, what will be found to apply for the necessity and function of the third initiation, in which the student himself has

¹ anyāṃ] corr.: ed. anayāṃ

sexual intercourse, will be deduced, *a posteriori*, to hold true, in some parallel or preliminary mode, for the preceding ritual act of the teacher.

The attractiveness of the tripartite body-speech-mind structure to Buddhists may even mean that that model inspired at least one element of the second of our initiations, although this is mere conjecture without any evidence to confirm or demolish the proposition. Thus the oral insemination, which is easily interpreted as in some sense purifying speech, might have been incorporated secondarily, between the preliminary group of more superficial, bodily initiations, and the culminating mind[-blowing] experience of the student's orgasm. While the second initiation might originally have been conceived as an anticipatory parallel to the third, with the teacher simply having a similar erotic experience, it could then have come to be perceived in terms of the triad and adapted in order to be meaningful in those terms. But this hypothesis may be to devalue the primary physical transference of Buddha qualities effected by the swallowing of one's master's semen.

Three Ritual Manuals

For now our declared intent is to find out whether the higher initiations are really required. We have another all-purpose ritual manual, the *Vajrāvalī*, by Abhayākaragupta (fl.1080off. cf. BÜHNEMANN 1992, and ERB 1997:27-28), who almost certainly postdates the author of our other general manual, Kuladatta (fl.1045–1080, cf. TANAKA & YOSHIZAKI 1998, p.128, and the unconvincing: SAKURAI 1996:34). These two texts are different from the *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* of Vāgīśvarakīrti, for example, in that they are designed to cover the practice of any or all of the tantras, while the *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* is a handbook that applies exclusively to ritual in the *Guhyasamāja* system. Vāgīśvarakīrti, a contempo-

rary of Ratnākaraśānti (in the early eleventh century; cf. MIMAKI 1992:297, fn.1), certainly predates Abhayākaragupta and his *Vajrāvalī*, and probably also Kuladatta and his *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* (cf. SAKURAI 1996:29).

Beginning then with the earliest of our three main manuals, the first question is what function the preliminary initiations serve. Vāgīśvarakīrti says that:

One initiated into the group [of five known collectively as the *vidyābhīṣeka*, up to and including the name initiation] is entitled to the hearing and exposition of [*Guhyasamāja*] mantra and tantra, and the practice of mantra.

(*taś cābhīṣekair*² *mantratantraśravaṇavyākhyāne mantrasādhane cādhiṣṭo bhavati*. SaṃAbhVidh 414)

His statement is clear enough that the earlier initiations are sufficient for entitlement to the teachings of the Yoga tantra, the *Guhyasamāja*, although he makes no reference to the possibility of attaining enlightenment on that basis. Otherwise, Vāgīśvarakīrti does go on to quote ‘There is no other means for Buddhahood (*nānyopāyena buddhatvam*, ibid. 417), in the section about the female consort and the student’s *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* with her. Thus he seems to envisage a two-fold qualification, first for introduction to the system, and then the unexplained requirement of the erotic initiation for enlightenment.

Soon after him, Kuladatta echoed his words, saying that:

The five initiations entitle one to hear and expound mantra and tantra.

(*pañcābhīṣekeṇa mantratantraśravaṇavyākhyāneṣv adhiṣṭo bhavati*. KriSaṃPañ 508).

It is tempting to read into his omission of Vāgīśvarakīrti’s entitlement to ‘the practice of mantra’ (*mantrasāadhanam*) a slight

2 cābhīṣekair] corr.: ed. cābhīṣekais

restriction on the effectiveness of the preliminary group. Perhaps Kuladatta is being careful to distinguish access to and promulgation of the teachings from their application in practice. This distinction might have been motivated by the broader scriptural field of his pronouncements, since his is a manual for *Yoginī* as well as *Yoga* tantras. He also paraphrases Vāgīśvarakīrti's verses under the rubric of the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*, and includes the same bald statement that, without the female consort and, from the context, intercourse with her,

There is no other means for Buddhahood.

(*nānyopāyena buddhatvam*, *ibid.* 512)

But beyond the purification of body, speech and mind discussed above, attributions at any rate absent in the antecedent *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, Kuladatta makes no clearer comment on whether or why the higher initiations should be required. However, he does drop one hint which is expanded upon elsewhere, as we will see (below p.208), with his reference to the fact that in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*:

By the method of churning-stick and churn [the teacher] marks the goal.

(*manthyamanthānakrameṇa lakṣaṃ vīkṣya*. KriSaṃPañ 512).

In Abhayākaragupta's *Vajrāvalī* we find altogether more theory accompanying the prescriptions about ritual performance, and a system that has evolved or is at least different from that apparently envisaged by Kuladatta and Vāgīśvarakīrti before him. Thus Abhayākaragupta states that:

A student who is consecrated by the [preliminary six] initiations is entitled to hear and teach and do the mantra practices of Kriyā and Caryā Tantras.

(*ebhir abhīṣekaiḥ siktaḥ śiṣyaḥ kriyācaryātantrayoḥ śravaṇavyākhyānamantrasādhaneṣv adhikṛto bhavati*; VajĀv 462)

But some *soi-disant* teachers claim, without scriptural support, that one is thus also entitled [thereby to hear, teach and do the mantra practices] of Yoga and Yoginī tantras. For, the Lord has nowhere taught that without the pledge of the initiation of the Innate, [i.e. the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka*,] [one] can talk about the nature thereof, nor would that be logical.

(*yogayoginītantrāṇām apīty ācāryaṃmanyamatam*³ *anāgamam. na hi sahaṣasekaṣaṃvaram antareṇa tatsvarūpam abhidhātum kvacid ādiśati sma bhagavān yuktaṃ*⁴ *vā. ibid. ctd.*)

Thus, Abhayākaraḡupta does require the third initiation, and so, *a posteriori*, also the second, to be taken for full entitlement to higher Tantric practice. He appeals to the standard pair of authorities, scripture (*āgama*), the word of the Buddha, and reason (*yukti*). The entitlement consequent on the preliminary rites has been severely restricted, to only the lower tantras. This is important since their teachings are not salvific, as we saw above (p.15). He condemns false teachers who claim those initiations are sufficient for the Higher Tantras. His criticism might have been directed towards Vāgīśvarakīrti, although that author's words applied only to the Yoga *Guhyasamāja*, or towards Kuladatta, whose unrestricted claim, applying therefore to all Tantras, was probably just because he was without reflection following the precedent set by Vāgīśvarakīrti or a similar author.

Finally, Abhayākara actually gives the proof that without having experienced the innate (*sahaja*) reality which is the bliss of nonduality one cannot discuss it. We can follow through his unspoken argument, that without that initial experience it would be impossible to direct post-initiatory practice towards the goal of realising that reality.

In drawing this conclusion about what real function Abhayākaraḡupta seems to think the erotic experience of the third ini-

3 ācāryaṃmanyamā-] MS: ed. ācāryamanyamā-

4 yuktaṃ] MS: ed. ayuktaṃ

tiation serves, we have arrived at the same answer as that gone into at length in the *Abhiṣekanirukti* of Sujayaśrīgupta (translated in the Appendix below). That text demonstrates that the experience of the bliss of sexual union in the third initiation will function thereafter as a glowing target beckoning one towards enlightenment, the permanent realisation of Great Bliss. Harunaga ISAACSON has summarised (1997a)—though not in a publication—the main argument.

Indeed, it is possible that Abhayākaragupta is influenced by the *Abhiṣekanirukti*'s arguments since Sujayaśrīgupta himself says that he was a student of Ratnākaraśānti (cf. below p.347), and we know that Abhayākaragupta postdates Ratnākaraśānti by about 50 years. However, as far as I know, there are no quotations of Sujayaśrīgupta, marked or unmarked, in Abhayākaragupta's work.

Abhayākara's insistence was on being able to 'speak about' or 'name' (*abhidhātum*) the non-dual experience. The first interpretation may imply a concern with teaching, and that an *ācārya* cannot properly communicate the system without that special experience. But immediately following the preliminary group comes the (*vajra*-)*ācāryābhiṣeka* (VajĀv 464), the irreversible consecration (*avaivartyābhiṣeka*) entitling one to become an *ācārya*, which in fact forms the final rite of the collection known as the first initiation. If, as seems most likely, Abhayākara is rather making the point about 'naming' or 'identifying' the experience then that would justify our conclusion that his reasoning is in line with that of Sujayaśrīgupta in the *Abhiṣekanirukti*. Thus, the fourth initiation is the identifying by the teacher of the experience of the third initiation as the example of the exemplary enlightenment experience. Moreover, presumably the fact that the *ācāryābhiṣeka* precedes the higher initiations does not in itself mean that one can become an *ācārya* without having gone on to have had, and have had explained to one, the experience of reality.

The Abhiṣekanirukti

The *Abhiṣekanirukti* is a complex treatise which enumerates three alternative positions with regard to what the goal consists of, each time with reference to the exemplary experience thereof in the third initiation. Sujayaśrīgupta first details the three alternatives in a Yogatantra context, namely that of the *Guhyasamāja*, and then runs through the same again as they apply in a Yoginī-tantra context, represented here, as often, by the *Hevajratantra*. He refers repeatedly to the Perfection Way (Pāramitānaya) of the Mahāyāna, to find confirmation for Tantric ideas, such that the common goal is bliss (*sukha*).

After the initial verse of obeisance to the highest principle, Vajradhara, the expressed programme of explaining ‘the meaning [and function] of the [higher Tantric] initiation[s]’ (*abhiṣekārtho nirucyate*; v.1d) is begun. The very first point to be made is that in the mistaken opinion of some

The goal [to be realised through Tantric *sādhana* practice] is excellent Bliss and contemporaneous [with the Wisdom Knowledge initiation] indeed.

That is wrong, however, because [of the unwanted consequence that] release would directly follow that [Wisdom Knowledge] initiation.

(*vr̥t̥tyudārasukhaṃ sādhyam idānīntanam eva ca
manyante tan na yuktaṃ tu sekānantaramuktitaḥ* v.2)

Before all else, Sujayaśrīgupta is concerned to emphasise that, whatever the higher initiations can bring about, they do not actually bestow the goal. He infers this negative fact from the post-initiatory practices enjoined on a student, endeavours which would be superfluous if the goal had already been attained.

A different reason for the same inference is one of Abhayākaragupta’s alternatives to actually taking the third initiation then and there with a physical consort. This comes from the section

preceding the lengthy account of the initiations themselves, where he describes who is eligible for them, a passage we will return to when we come to the question about the eligibility of monks for these rituals (cf. ‘Are monks eligible for sexual initiation?’ below). There Abhayākara provides an option for a student who has already had sexual experience in a previous phase of his life as a married man:

But if [the candidate] has experienced [erotic] bliss when previously a householder, he can be taught the stages of the blisses and so on by means of the memory thereof.

(*tasya tu prāggrhitve ’nubhūtasukhasya smaraṇenānandādibhedah pratipādayitavyaḥ*; VajĀv 446)

Although this proviso is made in a particular context to which we will return, the direct implication is that the experience of the third initiation, whatever else it may be, is not in itself a sacramental one.

Sujayaśrīgupta continues his argument, not against bliss as experienced in the third initiation *per se*, but against its being the goal:

How can [the bliss of the initiation which is] excellent [but] dependent on something else arise spontaneously? And how can it be right that that which ends should be the goal, for release would then be destructible?

(*vr̥t̥tyudāraṃ parādhīnaṃ kathaṃ svarasato bhavet; s̥āpāyaṃ ca kathaṃ sādhyāṃ yuktaṃ muktivināśataḥ* v.3)

Spontaneity of arising is required of the goal because enlightenment must be uncaused (*asaṃskṛta*) and thus spontaneous. One of the two Tibetan translations suggests instead of ‘spontaneously,’ ‘independently’ (*rang dbang grub pa* Tib I f.159v: **svavaśato*), which would merely make a more direct contrast with the dependence (*parādhīna*) of the bliss of initiation. If the goal were a

caused thing, then it might also be caused to end. As the second part of the verse goes on to imply, if the goal is reached in the third initiation but then lost, it would be part of *saṃsāra* and impermanence, and therefore not ultimate and not liberation. The crux is that sexual intercourse may well provide a moment of blissful nonduality, but that does not persist and the student is swiftly returned to the world of dualities.

Having established the disjunction between initiation and the goal, Sujayaśrī discusses various options for what that goal is. It is:

undefiled [and] without end, Absolute Bliss, like space [and] capable of activity for the benefit of the world. It is the body of the Saviours, known as the Dharmakāya, while the [other] two bodies which are based on [the Dharmakāya] are characterised by Enjoyment and Manifestation. In the unsurpassed Mahāyāna these two [bodies] too are the goal of Heroes, in order to be able to fulfil the needs of [both] themselves and others; for otherwise such [activity] would be impossible.

*(tasmād anāsravaṃ sādhyam anapāyam anuttaram
sukham ākāśasamkāśaṃ jagadarthakriyākṣamam.
sa eva tāyināṃ kāyo dharmakāya iti smṛtaḥ
tadāśrayau punaḥ kāyau bhoganirmāṇalakṣaṇau.
sādhyau tāv api vīrāṇāṃ mahāyāne niruttare
svaparārtthaprasiddhyartham anyathā tadayogataḥ. vv. 4–6)*

Here all the Mahāyāna is one, both Perfection and Mantra Ways. There is no indication of any superiority of Tantric Buddhism, whether in fruit or path, though the ways to the end are indeed different. Sujayaśrī emphasises that in Tantric Buddhism too a Bodhisattva's goal is not a cessation, but to be compassionately active, which is why he must realise all three *kāyas* including the Nirmāṇakāya which manifests in the world of sentient beings. Sujayaśrī briefly discusses the Pāramitānaya and Yogatantra methods

for attaining the Dharmakāya and the other two (vv.7–13), before returning to our question about what it is that is supposed to happen in the sexual initiations that makes them necessary on the path.

Therefore, in all the [Yoga and Yoginī] Tantra [system]s one should fully mark the Dharmakāya through [the third] initiation and by means of the [consort] seal, according to convention[al symbolic correspondences, gone in to in great detail later in this text], and due to the [actual] similarity [of the bliss experienced with the consort to the Bliss which is the Dharmakāya].

(*tasmāt sarveṣu tanreṣu saṃketena ca mudrayā
sārūpyeṇāpi saṃlakṣyo dharmakāyo 'bhiṣekataḥ*. v.14)

This is Sujayaśrī's theory, that in the initiation one experiences something similar (*sārūpyeṇa*) to the goal, which one should take note of as such (*saṃlakṣya*), to keep in mind as a model until the real thing can be permanently attained.

In the first paragraph of prose he puts it thus:

Moreover, [the goal] could not be cultivated unless it had [first] been realised.

(*na cājñātaṃ bhāvayitum śakyam*. p.352)

This sentence in fact comes within the first of three different positions (P) regarding the exact nature of what is to be experienced according to the paradigm Yogatantra, the *Guhyasamāja* system, namely whether: P1. the Dharmakāya alone is that which should be marked, because it is the [most] important (*prādhānyāt tu sa evaiko lakṣya*; v.15ab); P2. one should mark the Dharmakāya in the initiation, but together with the means for its accomplishment (*śasādhanaḥ sa evātra lakṣya*; v.15cd); or P3. all three bodies are to be separately marked, by means of the consort (*saṃvibhajyātra saṃlakṣyās trayāḥ kāyās tu mudrayā*; v.16; transl.: P1 pp.325–326,

P2 pp.326–334, P3 pp.334–336). We will not now enter into these positions, but will continue our examination of how the sexual initiation is said to anticipate liberation, which is Sujayaśrī's particular concern within the context of P1.

The Dharmakāya Alone

Sujayaśrī's argument continues:

Nor, now, [in preparatory practice before the higher initiations,] is there a realisation with that [Dharmakāya] as its object, for that would imply that if one could attain such [an experience of the fruit before the initiation], cultivation [thereafter] would be pointless. Nor is it logical that there should come into being [the fruit, which] is dependent on the transcendental path [of post-initiatory practice], until [an example of] that [fruit] is before one.

(*na ca samprati tadāmbanajñānam asti, tatprāptau bhāvanāyā vaiyarthya-prasaṅgāt. na ca lokottaramārgādhīnasya tadasam-mukhībhave bhāvo yuktaḥ.* p.352)

One must, therefore, see, according to the teacher's instructions, that the [orgasmic] realisation, which is had between [the moments] of the semen remaining within the glans [of the penis] and progressing out of it, is an example [of the ultimate realisation of everything as Dharmakāya]. [It] has the form of Great Bliss, appears as nondual, [and] counteracts all other perceptions. [The experience is had] while one is in union with a consort whose [vital] characteristics have been taught in the Tantras. [It is to be seen as an example, both] because of its resemblance to the Truth, since there is the appearance of nothing other than Great Bliss, beyond differentiation, which is the mental cultivation of that [goal] characterised by the consort presided over by all the Tathāgatas, and, because of the force of one's later conviction about reality that this is indeed that.

(*tasmāt tadbhāvanayā⁵ sarvatathāgatādbhīṣṭhitamudrālakṣaṇayāvi-*

5 tasmāt tadbhāvanayā] conj.: MS tasmād udbhāvanayā

kalpamahāsukhamātrapratibhāsatayā tattvasādṛśyāt tad evedam iti uttarakālaṃ tattvādhimokṣabalāc ca tantroktalakṣaṇamudrāsaṃyoge gurūpadeśato bodhicittamaṇimadhyasthitibahirnirgamayor antarāle yad upalabhyate sarvāṇyopalambhapratyanīkabhūtam advayābhāsaṃ mahāsukhākāraṃ jñānaṃ tad dṛṣṭāntabhūtaṃ draṣṭavyam. ibid. ctd.)

The last phrase here translated refers to the realisation that ‘that’ exemplary experience (*dṛṣṭānta*) is identical with the ultimately permanent experience of enlightenment— ‘this’. Sujayaśrī calls this a ‘conviction about reality’ (*tattvādhimokṣa*), and we may assume that it is what one learns in the fourth initiation, under the name ‘teaching about reality’ (*tattvadeśanā*). Indeed, the oldest known name of that fourth initiation, *tat punas tathā* ‘that again thus’ (GST 18.113f), could be understood to describe exactly that process, the verbal repetition of the third initiation (*tat punas*) identifying it for what it is (*tathā*). One curiosity about the scenario here envisaged is that Sujayaśrī appears to be expecting the teacher to be giving a running commentary while the student is in union with his consort (*-mudrāsaṃyoge gurūpadeśato... yad*), but presumably his instructions are in fact those of the fourth initiation which explain that what happened in the third is exemplary, and are here translated accordingly.

Moreover, those who aim at liberation, who are desirous of experiencing the Ultimate Truth, mark well that experience of the Ultimate Truth, though it be [only] exemplified, by means of this example, thanks to their certain knowledge of the [example at least,] because of its similarity to experiencing that [exemplified]. And when that experience of the Ultimate Truth has been ascertained [to be exemplary], according to the teacher’s instructions, that same Ultimate Reality which has been marked should be cultivated, carefully, continually [and] together with the pledges.

(*tadvedane ca sārūpyāt tadadhyavasāyato dārṣṭāntikam api paramārthajñānaṃ dṛṣṭāntenānena sūpalakṣitaṃ mumukṣūṇāṃ paramārthajñānābhilāṣiṇāṃ bhavati. tasmimś ca paramārthajñāne gurūpadeśato niścita... tad eva lakṣitaṃ paramatattvaṃ sādaranirantaraṃ samayasahitaṃ bhāvyate. ibid. ctd.*)

We have seen how, in the most general terms, the experience acquired in the third initiation is an example of the experience to be cultivated thereafter in post-initiatory practice. Experiencing the example gives one the essential advantage of knowing what to aim for, which Sujayaśrī said was a *sine qua non* for eventual success. Our generally applicable argument was included within his first specific position (P1), that the actual content of exemplary and exemplified bliss was none other than the Dharmakāya alone, glossed as Ultimate Truth (*paramārtha*, *paramatattva*). P1 concludes with the reasoning that in the end,

[all] three bodies are attained, very quickly and easily. Thus one should mark the Dharmakāya alone during the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, for it is the main thing, the basis of the [other] two bodies.

(*sukhataram āśutaram ca kāyatrayaṃ labhyata iti prajñājñānābhīṣekakāle prādhānyād dharmakāya evaikaḥ kāyadvayāśrayo lakṣyata iti prathamapakṣavādino manyante. p.353*)

According to Sujayaśrīgupta, the sexual intercourse of the third initiation enables the student to mark (root *lakṣ*) an example of the goal towards which he will direct his post-initiatory practice. I said above that Kuladatta hints at a similar understanding. Surprisingly, this hint comes at the end of his description of the second, the secret initiation. There he says:

After [the teacher] has had his [sexual] encounter with the woman, [and] through the method of churn [and] churning-stick perceived the goal (or its mark: *lakṣa*), he should blindfold the

student [and] with his ring-finger and thumb give his semen to the student's mouth.

(*paścāt tayā samāpattiṃ kṛtvā manthyamanthānakrameṇa lakṣaṃ vīkṣya śiṣyasya mukhaṃ baddhvānāmikāṅguṣṭhābhyāṃ bodhicittaṃ śiṣyavaktre dadyāt*. KriSaṃPañ 512).

Presumably preceding Kuladatta, and referred to by Harunaga ISAACSON in his unpublished paper on 'The Fourth Empowerment' (1997b:4), is a more explicit discussion of 'marking' (*lakṣaṇa*) and 'that to be marked' (*lakṣya*) in Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Tattvaratnāvalokavivarāṇa*, auto-commentary to his *Tattvaratnāvaloka*. In harmony with the section of the *Abhiṣekanirukti* we have been considering, Vāgīśvarakīrti is specialist in and writes with reference only to the system of the Yogatantra *Guhyasamāja*. The following passage glosses the overall meaning of the notoriously inexplicit *caturtham tat punas tathā* (GST 18.112):

And here the sense [of that *Guhyasamāja* phrase] is to be understood in terms of [the relationship between goal] to be marked, and the marking [thereof]. The marking is that by which [the goal] is marked, when it is being experienced, that is the Wisdom Knowledge [Initiation], because it is not logical that something which is not being perceived can be marked, because of the principle that there can be no comprehension of that which is to be distinguished unless the distinguishing feature has been grasped. [The goal] to be marked, [in the sense of:] [it] is marked, realised, made known; when it is being directly experienced, that is the fourth [initiation].

(*atra ca lakṣyalakṣaṇabhāvenārtho boddhavyaḥ. lakṣyate 'neneti lakṣaṇam anubhūyamānaṃ prajñājñānam apratīyamānasya lakṣaṇatvāyogāt, nāgrhītaviśeṣaṇā viśeṣyabuddhir iti nyāyāt. lakṣyate jñāyate pratipādyata iti*⁶ *lakṣyaṃ sākṣātkarīyamānaṃ caturtham*. TaRaAvVi p.140–141)

6 pratipādyata iti] conj. ISAACSON: ed. pratipādyate 'neneti

ISAACSON argues that the fourth empowerment needed to be more than just the speech of the guru, for:

Otherwise, that which as the final one one expects to be the culminating or crowning empowerment or consecration could well seem an anti-climax. (1997b:4)

Thus, it 'was seen as having, theoretically at least, another component as well' (*ibid.*). As expressed by Vāgīśvarakīrti, the third initiation contains the 'marking' or, less actively and instead of translating as a participle, 'characteristic' or 'mark', while the fourth should include 'that to be marked' itself, the 'goal'. The big question then is how that fourth initiation can include the goal, other than in mere words. The previous ritual, with its physical stimulation of the student causing him to have a powerful experience, seems much closer to the goal, through providing a moment of non-duality.

My own understanding of the tradition's reasoning would be that the third initiation does represent the 'mark' or 'marking' of 'that which is to be marked' ultimately and irreversibly as the goal. The fourth would then be the verbal declaration or revelation of that relationship to the student, lest he not appreciate the nature and function of what he has experienced. His experience was like his goal, but not the same as that final destination; it can help him on his way by functioning as a model or example that reminds one of where he is going and what it will be like to arrive. Following the experience comes its analysis, which reveals the ritual for what it was, even if such was not expected to be clear to the main actor while the action was being played out.

It is difficult to see how else but in this limited explanatory mode the fourth can be thought to include the goal. ISAACSON concludes his brief discussion of the issue by restating that:

[I]n some way [the Fourth Empowerment] should also be seen as being or as containing, ideally at least, the goal (*lakṣya* or *phala*). (*ibid.*:5)

The only source given to support this statement is what Vāgīśvarakīrti stated in the passage translated here above. Moreover, he also referred to the excerpt from the *Abhiṣekanirukti* translated here below, which corroborates the interpretation that the goal is experienced in the third initiation. It is the real thing, but only an example thereof, a sample, like the preparatory experience of a fighter pilot of G-forces or a prospective astronaut in zero-gravity, artificially simulated on planet Earth.

Nevertheless, there need be no contradiction between the two positions. While the third initiation may contain the goal, in an exemplary form, the fourth initiation may also contain the goal, this time somehow for real, all the more so since it is no longer bound up with an *ad hoc* sensual experience. One source not included in ISAACSON's preliminary presentation is the *Kriyā-saṃgrahapañjikā* where:

The jewel of initiations is the fruit which is the fourth initiation, taught in order to purify knowledge.

(*jñānaviśodhanārthaṃ... caturthābhiṣekaphalabhūtam abhiṣekaratnaṃ vaktavyam*. KriSaṃPañ 514)

The following quote from the *Abhiṣekanirukti* comes towards the end of the text, where there is a lengthy discussion of how many initiations there are in the Higher Tantras. The question boils down to whether there is a fourth distinct ritual or whether the fourth referred to in the *Guhyasamāja* phrase is something already known and performed, a final element within the third, or a preliminary group otherwise not explicitly included in the three, for example (cf. transl. pp.342–347). Here the position propounded is that the Fourth is indeed an independent initiation:

For, it is argued, just as the non-dual Great Bliss [is] experienced at the time of the Wisdom Knowledge [Initiation], 'likewise'

it is explained verbally by the teacher as being in the relationship of marking and that which is to be marked, according to the instructions, [and thus, through the explanation,] becomes something one is certain about. That is the Fourth Initiation. Thus they consider there to be a two-fold initiation of the mind itself, [one] of certainty and [one] of uncertainty.

(tathā hi yathāiva prajñājnānakāle mahāsukham advayam anubhūtaṃ tathāiva tad eva lakṣyalakṣaṇabhāvena yathopadeśaṃ gurunā vacasā pratipadyamānaṃ niścayaviśayatām gacchac caturthā-bhīṣeko bhavatīti cittasyaiva niścayāniścayarūpatayā dvividham abhīṣekaṃ manyante. AbhNir p.365)

These last two citations come from passages within arguments about the nature of the fourth initiation. There the concern with what happens in the third is to a certain extent subsidiary to giving some substance to the fourth. If, as ISAACSON has proposed and seems most probable (cf. above p.171), the fourth is a historically later innovation than the third, then these discussions are within a different context from that of the initial development of the third initiation alone.

While we will continue to use sources that know the full set of four, our particular focus is on the transgressive third, and here whether, or rather how, it is a requirement on the path of Higher Tantric Buddhism. We have now seen clearly stated that it is related to the goal as example or exemplary moment to exemplified ultimate. Our question is about the precise form of that example, in order to discern the process of exemplification that is envisaged. Rather than assigning the goal mysteriously to the fourth *abhīṣeka*, the *Abhīṣekanirukti*, at least, finds it in the third, if also, as we shall see, accompanied by a plethora of analogies to the path to attainment.

The second and third positions (P₂, P₃) of the *Abhīṣekanirukti* ascribe a different content to the exemplary and hence exemplified experience of the goal from that which we have seen above in P₁,

and so offer different reasons for why the third initiation should be necessary in Tantric Buddhism (which here still means what is taught by the Yogatantra the *Guhyasamāja*).

The Dharmakāya with the Means for its Accomplishment

P2 was that one should mark the Dharmakāya together with the means for its accomplishment (*sasādhana*; v.15cd).

[Its] argument runs as follows:

Even if [one knows that] the goal is Great Bliss, undefiled [and] without end, nevertheless, it cannot be accomplished without the means for its accomplishment. Therefore, just as [one should know] the [goal, the Dharmakāya], one should also know the means for its accomplishment'

(*ayam abhiprāyaḥ— yady api mahāsukham anāsravam anapāyi sādhyam tathāpi na tat sādhanam antareṇa śakyasāadhanam. atas tadvat tatsāadhanam api jñeyam.* p.353)

This is the longest exegesis of the three positions propounded in the text (pp.326–334), as might be expected given P2's ambitious programme to teach no less than the means as well as the goal, as exemplified in the third initiation. Beginning at the end, after the detailed break-down of the sexual union into a complete map of the route to the Dharmakāya:

Straight after the marking of the means, when one is in union with the best part of the body of the consort, [her vagina,] after the *bodhicitta* [semen] has gone to the crown of the glans of the penis, [one should] do everything one can to hold it there, by squeezing the head of the penis in the pericarp of the [vaginal] lotus according to the teachings, or by practising breath control by means of mantras such as *phaṭ*. Born together with that [*bodhicitta* semen] is the signifier of the Dharmakāya in the form of the absolutely pure Dharmadhātu and its realisation, which appears only as Great Bliss, in which all sensory activity has

ceased, unimaginable [and] beyond analysis. [Then and] there one should perfectly mark [that Great Bliss] with concentrated mind, [thinking,] ‘according to reality this [*bodhicitta*] is indeed that [Great Bliss],’ with the conviction [that] the example and exemplified are indivisible.

(*ataḥ sādhanalakṣaṇānantaram mudrāvarāṅgasāṅge vajramāṇiśikharaḥ kharagatam bodhicittam upadeśena padmavarāṇake vajramāṇipīdanād vāyuvijayābhyāsāt phaṭkāradimantreṇa*⁷ *vā samdhārya yathāśakti tatsahajam avicchinnaṃ akalpaṃ pratyastamitasarvendriyavṛtti mahāsukhamātrapratibhāsam suviśuddhadharmadhātutajjñānarūpadharmakāyasamupalakṣakam... dṛṣṭāntadārṣṭāntikayor abhedādhimokṣeṇa tattvarūpeṇa tad evedam iti samāhitena cetasā tatra samyak saṃlakṣaṇīyam. ibid. p.357)*

This analysis of what happens at the culmination of the third initiation is remarkable because the position appears to be that by immobilising the *bodhicitta* at the instant before emission one has the time to notice that the experience is an example of the goal and indeed no different from it.

Although it is true that, biologically, orgasm precedes emission, the prolongation of orgasm— and the same should be said for the retention of semen— are surely not techniques to be expected of an initiate, but rather an experienced practitioner. Let alone the logical objection of how one could mark this equivalence at a moment of experience ‘in which all sensory activity has ceased, unimaginable [and] beyond analysis.’ The fourth initiation’s function of verbally marking the equivalence between the goal and orgasm seems to be subsumed here into the mental processes of the third itself. Indeed, as we have seen, the final section of the *Abhiṣekanirukti* is devoted to precisely the question of whether the fourth initiation exists or in what it is said to consist, but this silent incorporation of the fourth into the third is not discussed here.

7 phaṭkāra-] corr.: MS phatkāra-

The marking of the means here is even more remarkable for its in-depth simultaneous deconstruction of the erotic experience, as we shall see, in a way which would surely demand that one were not a beginner, but rather advanced in the practice. This whole position gives the impression of being in practice difficult to uphold, while offering Sujayaśrī the rhetorical opportunity to elaborate on how sexual yoga can be understood to function.

The goal is Great Bliss:

And, the means for its accomplishment (*sādhana*) is a realisation (*jñāna*) which in the Yogatantra[s] is sealed by all the Tathāgatas with forms of the deities, [*maṇḍalas*, mantras], and so on, in accordance with the pledges. [It is also] the mundane path of the accumulations [of merit and wisdom, as well as] the transcendental [paths of] insight [and] mental cultivation. And that [realisation which is the means] is to be well marked during the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, right from the beginning, as it arises, as the sign of the arising of a realisation which is the marking (or: has the marks) of the Truth.

(*tac ca tasya sādhanam laukikalokottarasambhāradarśanabhāvanāmārgasvabhāvam yathāsamayam sarvatathāgatair devatādyākāramudritam jñānam yogatantra. tad api prajñājñānābhiseke tattvalakṣaṇajñānotpattinimittatayārambhataḥ prabhṛti yathotpatti saṃlakṣaṇīyam. ibid. p.353*)

Historically speaking, the mundane path of the two accumulations, of merit and wisdom (*puṇya-/jñāna-saṃbhāra*), and the transcendental two paths of insight and cultivation (*darśana/bhāvanā*), are early components of the means to enlightenment. These last two are heirs to a threefold category (*mātrkā*) of eradicating the defilements which are to be abandoned by insight, or by mental cultivation, or are not to be abandoned (*darśana-/bhāvanā-/a-heya*; Cox 1992:75). The two pairs are pre-Mahāyāna Sarvāstivādin categories, which juxtapose the effects of action, actual (*puṇya*) or mental (*bhāvanā*), and intellect (*jñāna/darśana*).

This distinction presumably also maps onto that of the early Mahāyāna between the two kinds of obscurations, moral and intellectual (*kleśa-ljñeya-āvaraṇa*). Nevertheless, as Collett Cox stresses, the distinction need not represent tension, since the two are simply complementary methods to achieve the goal (*ibid.*:65–66). What matters, and Cox asserts has too often been overlooked, is that, by both methods, the ‘ultimate objective is recognized to be the abandonment of defilements’ (*ibid.*:66). As we will see, that Buddhist truism applies equally to P2’s presentation of its method.

Four Limbs of Means

Here the Yoga Tantric experience, which is stamped with the forms of deities, *maṇḍalas*, mantras and so on, incorporates pre-Tantric elements of the path. The means (*sādhana*) is further subdivided according to the division of means (*upāya*) into four in the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*: worship, subsidiary means, means and great means.

(*caturvidham upāyaṃ tu bodhivajreṇa varṇitam*
yogatantrēṣu sarveṣu śasyate yoginā sadā:
sevāvidhānaṃ prathamam dvitīyam upasādhanaṃ
sādhanaṃ tu tṛtīyaṃ vai mahāsādhanaṃ caturthakam. GST 18.135–
 6)

In order to appreciate the elaboration of P2’s exegesis of the function of the initiation in terms of it including the means as well as the end itself, we will examine the relevant extended section of Sujayaśrī’s presentation. As is to be expected given the theme, the text is graphic and explicit about the individual aspects of sexual intercourse entailed.

Worship

The first of the four subdivisions of means (*upāya*) is worship (*sevā*), which is defined as the union of goal and means (*sādhya-sādhana-samyogam yat tat seveti bhāṇyate* GST 18.176ab, cited AbhNi p.354). That ‘worship’ begins with

the sight of the body of the consort, dear to the practitioner [and] whose vital characteristics have been described in the Tantras, the touch of her firm breasts and the rest [of her body], the hearing of her impassioned cries, the taste of her lower lip, and the smell of musk on her limbs. These [sensations] merge together just like an illusion, and joy is born together with them. This [first part of the worship] should from the very beginning be marked as of the nature of the Tathāgatas Vairocana and the others, [and] the Vajra Lords, Rūpavajra, [Sparśavajra, Gandhavajra and so on up to the sixth, Dharmadhātuvajra]. In it is contained the Path of the Accumulations (*sambhāramārga*).

(*tantroktalakṣaṇāyāḥ sādhanapriyāyā*⁸ *mudrāyā yad rūpadarśanam kaṭhinastanādisparśanam sānurāgarutākarmaṇam adharasāsvādanam gātragatamṛganābhigandhāghrāṇam teṣāṃ ca māyopamatayā saṃkalanam tatsahajā ca*⁹ *prītiḥ tad vairocanāditathāgatarūpavajrādivajrādhipatisvabhāvaṃ sambhāramārgasamgrhītam ārambhata eva lakṣaṇīyam.* *ibid.* p.353).

Already, a complex arrangement of analogies is being described. The five senses are employed, but their sensations dissolve, illustrating the irreality of their objects and the experience. This is presumably brought about by some initial phase like a swoon, beyond dichotomising consciousness of the distinctions between sensations. In this and every stage of the process, joy (*prīti*) arises. We may assume this to represent a repeated marking of the goal, contemporaneous with the details of the marking of the means to that goal. The experiences of the five sensations, combined

8 *sādhakapriyāyā*] em.: MS *sādhakapriyasyā*

9 *ca*] MSpc: MSac om.

with their dissolution and the accompanying joy, correspond to the five Tantric personifications of the symbols of the five Buddha families, and the set of five Buddhas. This first section of the initiation further represents the Path of Accumulations, a pre-Mahāyāna means (*sādhana*).

Making that same consort one's own by a deep embrace, and the firmness of her breasts and the rest [of her body, both have] the nature of [the element] earth [and are] the object of a tactile realisation. The mind does not wander elsewhere or perceive external objects since only [the mind] itself appears. Joy too arises together with such realisations (*jñāna*). [All the above from making the consort one's own onwards are] to be marked (*lakṣaṇīya*) straightaway as the Lord Vairocana, Locanā [and the *kleśa*] Delusion, at the level of enjoyment (*bhogavyavasthā*) Moharati and Mohavajra, and at the level of means the marking of 'worship,' the first limb, in which is included the [four] Stages of Insight (*nirvedhabhāgīya*).

(*yat tasyā eva mudrāyā gāḍhāsleṣeṇa svīkaraṇam yac ca kucādikā-thīnyam pṛthivīsvabhāvam sparśajñānālamabanabhūtam, svapratibhāsamātratayā bahirarthānupalambho 'nyatra cāpracāraḥ cetasas tathāvidhajñānasahajā ca yā prītiḥ sa bhagavān vairocano locanā moho bhogavyavasthāyām¹⁰ moharatir mohavajras copāvyavasthāyām ca sevālakṣaṇam prathamam aṅgam nirvedhabhāgīyasamgrahītām tad anantaram lakṣaṇīyam. ibid.ctd.*)

Still within the first limb of means, the uniting of goal and means is continued. Joy arises at the same time as the pressure of the embrace represents the element of solidity, earth, the object of a tactile sensation. In fact, the mind is said not to perceive external objects, because it alone appears. The student is having a sensual experience of the touch of his consort's body, but this is somehow not the same as perceiving external objects. He is cognisant of only his own cognising organ as well as the tactile

10 bhogavyavasthāyām] corr.: MS bhogavyavasthāyā

sensation, since the mind is so absorbed in its erotic experience that all else is excluded (*anyatra cāpracārah*). The effect is the same as that of calming *śamatha* meditation, according to one interpretation, to calm and thus focus the mind, in preparation for insight *vipāśyanā* meditation.

Recognition of the element earth in the experience will be followed by the elements water, fire and wind at the biologically apposite moments of the remaining limbs of means. Such identifications mark a coincidence of microcosm and macrocosm, reducing the elemental universe to a transient sensual experience. As will here be repeatedly implied, all that really matters is the Dharmadhātu— the reality element, or realm of truth. The rest is illusion, or delusion. Delusion is both the first defilement associated with the initiation, and normally the basis, as beginningless ignorance (*ajñāna*), for the other *kleśas* such as passion and hatred. The whole experience so far is to be equated with the Buddha Vairocana, who is elsewhere also associated with Delusion, and his consort Locanā (cf. SNELLGROVE 1959:I.128, albeit a Yoginītantra *Hevajratantra* context).

A distinction is made between analysis at the level of enjoyment (*bhoga*) and at the level of means. The latter reference is clear: it is to the four-fold division whereby the first limb is ‘worship,’ glossed as the union of goal and means, the basic premiss of P2’s claim for the third initiation. One can only assume that the level of enjoyment refers to the very moments of the sexual initiation itself. In that case the mind boggles at the proliferation of factors to be incorporated into an initiating ritual. Indeed, otherwise we only know of the intercourse described baldly, without any elaboration of activity of the kind envisaged here: kissing and so on. The most we find perhaps is the assimilation of two sets of four, consecrations and tantra classes, to a smile, a gaze, an embrace, and union (*hasita, īkṣaṇa, pāṇyāvāpti/āliṅga, dvandva*;

HT II.iii.11, 54).

Nor is the complexity complete without the final point that at the level of means ‘worship’ includes the four stages of insight (*nirvedhabhāgīya*). These four: heat (*ūṣmagata*), summit (*mūrdhan*), patience (*kṣānti*) and the highest mundane factors (*laukikāgradharma*), are

traversed prior to the acquisition of the first moment of thought not tending towards the fluxes (*anāsravacitta*), which constitutes the first moment of the path of vision. (COX 1992:76)

The path of vision or insight (*darśanamārga*) is indeed the next path to be associated with the initiation process.

Following the above-quoted citation of the relevant *Guhyasamāja* half-verse on the first limb of means, ‘worship’, Sujayaśrī remarks:

Here and in the subsequent performance[s], the sense is that the wise teacher and student must emanate, retract and [inbetween have act for the benefit of sentient beings,] Vairocana and [the other four Buddhas], who are the summing up of all the Tathāgatas, and the [four] Goddesses Buddhalocanā and so on, and Mohavajra and the other [four] Bodhisattvas, and Moharati and the other [four] Goddesses, according to the instruction.

(*atrottaratra ca vyāpāre vairocanādīnām sarvatathāgatasamgrahabhūtānām buddhalocanādīnām ca devīnām*¹¹ *mohavajrādīnām ca bodhisattvānām moharatyādīnām ca devīnām vijñābhīyāṃ guruśiṣyābhīyāṃ yathopadeśataḥ spharaṇasamharaṇādīkaṃ kāryam*¹² *iti.* ibid. p.354)

This general comment curiously brings the teacher into the equation. It is possible that the reference is to his activity earlier, during the preceding *guhyābhīṣeka*, for in the *prajñājñānābhīṣeka* one

¹¹ buddhalocanādīnām ca devīnām] insert foll. Tib I sangs rgyas spyān la sogs pa'i lha mo: om. in MS and Tib II

¹² kāryam] MSpc: MSac kāyam

would expect only the student and his consort to be active. The more probable alternative is that the teacher is integral to the ritual of the third initiation. If the experience produces an example of the goal, the teacher is always the living example of someone arrived at the goal. His discreet presence reinforces the function of the activity, and his support may well help the student through a testing rite of initiation. But the problem remains that our text implies that the teacher and student together simultaneously visualise the generation and retraction of the Buddhas and so on. Unfortunately, Sujayaśrī does not expand on this issue.

He appears to be summing up everything that happens in the initiation (*atrottaraśra ca*) as the emanation and absorption of the five Buddhas and their consorts, and the *kleśa* Vajra Bodhisattvas and their Rati consorts. As usual, the females are to be emanated by the female consort, although that division of labour is not specified here. Between emanating and absorbing (*-ādika*) these enlightenment beings, the unsupplied middle would normally be that clever teacher and student should imagine them acting for the benefit of all sentient beings (*sattvārthakaraṇa*; cf. e.g. *spḥuritvā daśasu dikṣu bhagavatyaṅkāraiḥ sattvārthaṃ kṛtvā punas tatraiva bījācīhne saṃharaṇaṃ kṛtyānuṣṭhānasvabhāvam*.¹³ SāMā 97, vol.I p.196). However, this is in accordance with the logic of requiring the goal to include also the third Buddha body, the Nirmāṇakāya which emanates into our universe in order to act on the compassion shared by every Bodhisattva, i.e. every Mahāyāna Buddhist. And our P2 shared with P1 the belief that the goal to be marked in the initiation is the Dharmakāya alone, albeit as a basis for the other two bodies.

One of the unspoken reasons why a student of Tantric Buddhism must have sex is because he replicates the activity of his sexually active Tantric Buddha, so as to fully realise their iden-

¹³ bījācīhne saṃharaṇaṃ kṛtyānuṣṭhānasvabhāvam] conj. ISAACSON: ed. bījācīhnaṣaṃharaṇakṛtyānuṣṭhānasvabhāvam.

tical enlightened identity. Of course, this is not to explain the invention of the union of the Buddha in the first place, or to claim that it was conceived of historically prior to the development of sexual yoga. But we are again reminded in this context of a different possible motivation for the invention of the practice, the plain fact that this is a method for producing human seed which in turn marvelously brings about the creation of human beings. That makes such a method seem appropriate for enacting the analogous generation of enlightenment beings, as here. There are a host of further analogies between the act of union and enlightenment:

Subsidiary Means

Next one must experience by means of the consort the uniting of lotus [vagina] with vajra [penis]. [The vagina] of that same consort, who [represents] the Dharmadhātu, is triangular and hollow within, by virtue of the voidness [of own-existence of the trinity] body, speech and mind. [It is] broad above symbolising the vertical succession of stages. [It is] of the nature of the totally pure Dharmadhātu which is its object. [The penis] is a firm and solid rod, inasmuch as it has the nature of indivisible perfect insight. [It] faces upwards because emptiness like space is its support. [The uniting of such a lotus with such a vajra must be experienced as] the seeing of the [otherwise] invisible Dharmadhātu, [which seeing] has the nature of the undefiled Path of Insight (*darśanamārga-*) [and is] characterised by insight into the all-pervasive Dharmadhātu.

*(tatas tasyā eva dharmadhātumudrāyāḥ kamalasya kāyavākacitta-
śūnyatayā tryasrasyāntaḥśuśīrasya coparyupari bhūmiviśuddhitayo-
pariviśālasyalambanabhūtasuviśuddhadharmadhātusvabhāvasyābhe-
dyasamyagjñānasvabhāvatayā ghananibīḍadaṇḍāyamānenākāśa-
maśūnyatāvalambanatayordhvamukhena vajreṇa yad advayīkara-
ṇam adṛṣṭasya dharmadhātor darśanam anāsravadarśanamārga-
svabhāvaṃ sarvatragadharmadhātuprativedhalakṣaṇaṃ tan mu-*

drayā jñeyam. ibid. ctd.)

This second limb of means, the ‘subsidiary means’ (*upasādhana*), is glossed in the *Guhyasamāja* verse (translated in the next paragraph below) as the union of *vajra* and lotus. Thus this is the occasion for Sujayaśrī to explain, according to his P2, the respective soteriological characteristics of the two sexual organs. In this context lotus is not the most descriptive term, unless the flower is thought of as hollow within; nor is it a feminine noun. But regardless of the name, the physical space is conceived of as triangular (and is often identified with the triangular form of the letter *e* in medieval Indian scripts, cf. the red triangles of French paleolithic art: <http://www.instituteofstudies.com/library/earliestimages/early2.html>), emptiness of body, speech and mind embodied and so on. The *vajra* is adamant as its namesake, nondual as the ultimate reality, or here expressly indivisible as perfect wisdom. On one level the union (*advayīkaraṇa*) of man and woman always represents the enactment of nonduality. And after all the whole religion is also known as the Vajrayāna. The coming together of such an indivisible wisdom with the void, or the totally pure Dharmadhātu, is unproblematically assimilated to the path of insight (*darśanamārga*), logically consequent on the preceding stages of insight (*nirvedhabhāgīya*).

Moreover, during this [process], the realisation of the uniting of vajra and lotus, and the aversion to their separation [which would be a] disjunction, and the moistness which, as the element water, is their [so to speak] support, and the joy co-emergent with these [experiences, all these] are to be marked straightaway as the Lord Akṣobhya, the [*kleśa*] Hatred, [and] Māmakī, at the level of enjoyment Dveṣarati and Dveṣavajra, and at the level of means ‘subsidiary means,’ the second limb. For it is taught [in the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*] that: ‘The union of vajra and padma is held to be the subsidiary means’ (GST 18.176cd).

(*tatra ca yad vajrapadmayor advayīkaraṇajñānaṃ yac ca tayor bhedo viyogātmake vaimukhyaṃ yā ca tadāmbanabhūtabdhātusvabhāvā klinnatā yā ca tatsahajā prītiḥ sa bhagavān akṣobhya dveṣo māmakī, bhogavyavasthāyāṃ dveṣaratir dveṣavajraś ca, upāyavyavasthāyāṃ*¹⁴ *dvitīyam aṅgam upasādhanam anantaram lakṣaṇīyam. tad uktam— vajrapadmasamāyogam upasādhanam iṣyate* (GST 18.176cd). *ibid.* ctd.)

Becoming one entails a symmetrically opposite dislike of separation which means that the student and his consort are stimulated to experience the *kleśa* Hatred. Hence it is the equivalent Buddha Akṣobhya and his consort who are to be visualised. Because of lubrication the element here manifested is water. Having introduced the actors and their attributes, Sujayaśrī moves on to the action:

Means

[Next] one must realise by means of the consort the Investigation [Knowledge] of every form, which is characterised by multiplication [and] is of the nature of the undefiled path of meditation. [One experiences this Investigation Knowledge] by [means of] the penis, which is of the nature of Perfect Knowledge, [and] repeatedly, with complete absorption, enters into and withdraws from the broad vagina, whose form is the Dharmadhātu, of the same Dharmadhātu consort. At that [time], one realises frictional contact with the interior of [her] vagina, and, the heat generated from [that] friction is the object of that [experience,] the element fire. [These two] and the joy co-emergent with these [experiences, are all] to be marked straight away as the Lord Amitābha, the [*kleśa*] Passion, [and] Pāṇḍarā, [and] Rāgarati and Rāgavajra at the level of enjoyment, [and] the third limb, called ‘means’ at the level of means. For it is taught that: ‘The “means” is taught to be setting [the penis] in motion, accompanied by [the mantra] *hūṃ phaṭ*’ (GST 18.177ab).

14 upāyavyavasthāyāṃ] MSpc: MSac upāyavyavasthāṃ

(*tasyā eva dharmadhātumudrāyā vipulakamalasya dharmadhāturūpasyāntaḥpraveśaṇīḥkāsavatā vajreṇa samyagjñānasvabhāveṇa punaḥ punar ekāntāsaktena sarvākāraṃ yat pratyavekṣaṇaṃ bahulīkaraṇalakṣaṇaṃ anāsravabhāvanāmārgasvabhāvaṃ tan mudrāyā veditavyam. tatra ca yat padmāntargharṣaṇasaktijñānaṃ yā ca tadālamabanabhūtā gharṣaṇavaśād uṣṇatā tejodhātusvabhāvā yā ca tatsahajā prītiḥ sa bhagavān amitābho rāgaḥ pāṇḍarā, bhogavyavasthāyāṃ rāgaratī rāgavajraś ca, upāyavyavasthāyāṃ sādhanākhyāṃ trītyāṃ aṅgaṃ anantaraṃ lakṣaṇīyam. tad uktam- sādhanam cālanaṃ proktaṃ hūṃphaṭkārasamanvitam* (GST 18.177ab) *iti. ibid. ctd.*)

‘Means’ is the actual motion of intercourse, a repeated entry into the Dharmadhātu. These multiple movements are together analogous to the Investigation Knowledge, the fourth of the classical group of five (*suviśuddhadharmadhātu-*, *ādarśa-*, *samatā-*, *pratyavekṣaṇā-*, *kṛtyānuṣṭhāna-jñāna*; loc. class.: cty *ad* MaSūAl 9.67ab: *caturvidhaṃ buddhānāṃ jñānaṃ ādarśajñānaṃ samatājñānaṃ pratyavekṣājñānaṃ kṛtyānuṣṭhānajñānaṃ ca; ādarśajñānaṃ acalaṃ trīṇi jñānāni tadāśritāni calāni*. The *suviśuddhadharmadhātujñāna* probably came later, based on Vasubandhu’s *Triṃśikā* 30ab: *sa evānāsravo dhātur acintyaḥ kuśalo dhruvaḥ*, cf. VijñMāSi p.699). In numerical parallel, the Investigation is here assimilated to the Path of Meditation, fourth of the group of five codified especially in Asaṅga’s *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (*sambhāra-*, *prayoga-*, *darśana-*, *bhāvanā-*, *niṣṭhā-/āśaikṣa-mārga*; cf. BUSWELL 1992:8). Friction generates heat, and so the element fire is also represented. In this phase of the relationship the participants are under the influence of the *kleśa* passion itself, and so are to visualise themselves as spiritually Amitābha and Pāṇḍarā respectively, while at the physical level of enjoyment they incarnate the Bodhisattva and goddess Rāgavajra and Rāgaratī. The sexual intercourse of the ‘means’ is verbally sacralised by the accompaniment of the mantra *hūṃ phaṭ*.

For the sake of completeness, each of the group of five Buddhas should have a corresponding phase of the initiation, yet there are only four limbs of means. That is why a subsidiary section is introduced:

Further, at that very level [of sexual union,] the means, [the male participant,] and the wisdom, [his female consort,] have the nature of all the Tathāgatas [and] their Wisdom [consorts. They experience] elevation of the mind (or: arrogance) and delight (or: delirious pleasure). [The former is generated] by means of the pride in being, [respectively,] the active and passive participants of the union, [which pride] is born from their extreme passion, [and delight is generated] by the similarly [passionately begotten] sensation of erotic bliss. [That elevation of the mind and delight are] to be experienced, together with the consort, as the Lord Ratnasambhava, [who is the Buddha of] the [minor *kleśas*] pride (*māna*) and intoxication (*mada*), [and] within whom is contained the path of distinction (*viśeṣamārga*). Moreover, [these minor *kleśas*] should in fact be included with Rāgavajra, because of [their] being equivalent to passion [and] being mental state[s]. Therefore, this is not a separate limb [called] ‘means’.

(*tasyām eva cāvasthāyāṃ sarvatathāgatatatprajñāsvabhāvayor prajñopāyayor atyantāsaktijanitābhiyojyābhiyokṛtvābhimānena sadṛśasuratasukhasaṃvedanena yā cittonnatir harṣaś ca sa bhagavān ratnasambhavo māno mado viśeṣamārgasaṃgrhīto mudrayā vedītavyaḥ. sa ca caitasikatvena rāgasāmānyena ca rāgavajra evāntarbhāvanīya iti nāsau pṛthak sādhanāṅgam iti. ibid. ctd.*)

The first words of this paragraph appear to confirm the supposition that the extra insert is required by the shortfall between the four limbs of means and the five Tathāgatas. That would explain the reference at this very moment to the initiand and his woman incarnating *all* (*sarva*-) the Buddhas and their consorts. The erotic practice entails many defiling human weaknesses, including passionate pride in one’s performance and passionate intoxication by

sensual bliss. These two are here identified with the Buddha Ratnasambhava, without a consort (elsewhere, in the *Hevajratāntra* for example, Ratnasambhava is said to correspond to *paśunya*, slander; cf. SNELLGROVE 1959:I.129). Also contained herein is the path of distinction (*viśeṣamārga*), absent from the group of five cited above from Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and from several other accounts of the path. It is however found in a parallel position to this one in Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (e.g. *prayogadarśanabhāvanāviśeṣamārga*; p.17.1–2). Because pride and intoxication are really byproducts of passion, they are subsumed under the limb of 'means'. They are mental (*caitasika*) inasmuch as no separate activity in the sexual intercourse is allocated to them.

Great Means

Thereupon, [the couple who personify] wisdom and means have the realisation (*jñāna*) of the ultimate erotic engagement, which has as its object the totally pure Dharmadhātu, [and] is characterised by activity directed towards the goal. [The couple] appear as nondual. Through their superlative mental cultivation they have generated the Highest Joy (*paramānanda*). For them the activity of [the three *kleśas*] Delusion, Hatred and Passion have become indistinguishable. [The student] should experience [all of this,] within which is included the Path of Completion (*niṣṭhāmārga*), by means of the consort.

(*tad anu ca prajñopāyayor advayapratibhāsayor atyantabhāvanayor dbhūtaparamānandayor samarasībhūtamohadveṣarāgapracārayor viśuddhadharmadhātvalambanaṃ paramasuratavyāpārajñānaṃ sādhyābhīmukhakarmalakṣaṇaṃ yat tanniṣṭhāmārgasaṃgrhītaṃ*¹⁵ *tan mudrayā veditavyam*. AbhiNir *ibid.* ctd.)

At this stage the means is transforming into the goal:

¹⁵ niṣṭhāmārgasaṃgrhītaṃ] corr., with Tib.: MS tanniṣṭhāmārgasaṃgrhītaṃ

Moreover, during that [experience,] the element wind is what drives the *bodhicitta* [semen,] co-emergent with Great Bliss (*mahā-sukha*), along the channel at the tip of the *vajra* [penis.] The knowledge, which has as its object the tactile sensation of the moving semen [and] which does not cause one to act in any of the ways laid down in erotic manuals, drives the penis. [The penis] is itself Perfect Knowledge, directed in action towards the goal, [and] immediately accomplishes the fruit. The sensation of [one's] own form, whose single essence is [the three *kleśas*] passion, hatred and delusion, has as its mark the realisation of internal contact, [and] has the Highest Joy (*paramānanda*) as its nature. [These factors] and the Joy (*prīti*) born together therewith should straightaway be marked respectively as: the Lord Amoghasiddhi, Jealousy, Desire (*kāma*), and [the goddess] Samayatārā. At the level of enjoyment [they are to be marked as] Samayavajra and Vajrarati. At the level of means, [all this] should be marked as the fourth limb, called 'great means'. [It is so identified] because the activity of passion, hatred and delusion has been calmed, because [one is] charmed (*yogita*-) with extremely intense bliss, and because of the continuous presence of the fruit. For it is taught: 'The 'great means' is taught to be pacified, own bliss [and] own nature.' (GST 18.177cd).

(*tatra ca yo vajramaṇināḍyāṃ bodhicittasya mahāsukhasahajasya prerako vāyudhātuś caladbodhicittasparśāmbanam ca yaj jñānam sakalasurataśāstravihitavyāpārāṇām apravartakam samyagjñānātmano vajrasyaiva sādhyābhimukhe karmaṇi pratītya prerakam anantaram eva phalābhinirvartakam yac ca rāgadveṣamohādīnām samarasam svarūpavedanam antaḥsparśānubhavalakṣaṇam paramānandasvabhāvaṃ yā ca tatsahajā prītiḥ, sa yathāyogam bhagavān amoghasiddhir īrṣyā*¹⁶ *kāmaḥ samayatārā bhogavyavasthāyāṃ samayavajro vajraratiś ca, upāyavyavasthāyāṃ śamitarāgadveṣamohapracāratayātibahalatarasukhayogitayā phalāvuyabhicāritayā ca mahāsādhanaḥ caturtham aṅgaṃ tad anantaram lakṣaṇīyam. tad uktam- svabhāvaṃ svasukhaṃ śāntaṃ mahāsādhanaṃ ucyate* (GST 18.177cd) *iti. ibid. ctd.*)

16 īrṣyā] em.: MS īṣyā

This is the culmination of the initiation, the time of orgasm (but not ejaculation, as we saw above p.214). Hence the element represented is wind, which propels the semen along its channel.

The experience is said not to be directed by any of the prescriptions of the erotic manuals. This might seem to be a warning against overdependence on either rule and regulation for sex as such, or secular textbooks in particular which could be expected to have different goals in mind. But within the most well-known of those manuals the point is made that once one's interest has been aroused, systematic manoeuvres go out of the window:

As long as men's desire is faint it is a matter for the textbooks, but once the wheel of passion is on a roll there is neither textbook nor method.

*(śāstrāṇāṃ viśayas tāvad yāvan mandarasā narāḥ
raticakre pravṛtte tu naiva śāstraṃ na ca kramah. KāSū 2.2.31.).*

Here too the statement probably has similar force, that one is by now beyond the purview of such guidance or controls.

The final Buddha is of course Amoghasiddhi, and hence the corresponding *kleśa* is jealousy (cf. SNELLGROVE 1959:I.129). However, for the first time so far, no recognisable symbolisation of this emotion is incorporated into the ritual activity. On the other hand, the remark is twice made that the three main *kleśas* have become indistinguishable. Moreover, following jealousy, desire or love (*kāma*) is listed, as though that afflicting sentiment is located more in this moment than any of the preceding.

Indeed, later on in the presentation of P2 (after this section of four stages) the four limbs are glossed as follows:

During the Wisdom [Knowledge] Initiation, [they are] sealed by all the Tathāgatas with the seal[s] of, respectively, embrace, penetration, making [the penis] move around, and the generation of knowledge.

(*prajñābhīṣe ke yathāyogaṃ parirambhaprativedhavicāraṇājñāno-dayamudrayā sarvatathāgatair mudritānām*; AbhiNir p.356)

The first three are absolutely as we saw them, elements of the physical encounter, while the fourth is said to be a ‘generation of knowledge’. The definition in the original *Guhyasamāja* listing is different again, and is anticipated in the prose. Thus the ‘great means’ is: pacified because the three *kleśas* have been calmed, own bliss because that is what one feels, and own nature in as much as the goal itself is present, in the form of the afore-mentioned bliss. This final stage seems to be designated the ‘generation of knowledge’ where the knowledge is of the goal, as opposed to the preceding stages of means.

So we have come to the end of the step by step analysis of the initiation, according to proponents of the position that as well as the goal the means thereto are also to be marked. Next further analogies are taught, between the experience of the destruction of the *kleśas* or obstructions and the deities Yamāntaka, Prajñāntaka, Padmāntaka and Vighnāntaka (AbhiNir p.4356). These equivalences derive from verses of the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*, cited here, which make explicit that, for example,

through the enjoyment of delusion is the destruction of delusion.

(*mohopabhogena kṣayamoho (=mohakṣaya)*; GST 18.58ab, cited AbhiNir p.356).

This is lest we forget that the function of the intercourse in terms of means to the goal is to make present the defilements, so that they may be enjoyed, by which enjoyment they will be eradicated.

Thus, then, the four means are hostile to the [*kleśas*] Delusion, Hatred and Passion etc. and their latent impressions.

(*tad evaṃ*¹⁷ *mohadveṣarāgādīnām*¹⁸ *tadvāsanānām ca pratipakṣabhūtānām... caturṇām sādhanānām*; ibid. p.356).

¹⁷ evaṃ] em.: MS tad eva

¹⁸ moha-] MSpc: om. MSac

Normally, according to conventional religious appeals for restraint, sexual relations are to be avoided precisely because they entail negative human characteristics, whether necessarily, or simply putting one at risk of coming under the influence of the same. P2 instead propounds the homeopathic thesis that sin purifies from sin. If, again, the erotic initiations are absolutely necessary for Higher Tantric enlightenment, and if one argument for their requirement is that through, or only through the generation, however controlled, of the defilements they can be removed, then the corollary is that this all can only follow from the premiss that the defilements are indeed necessarily entailed by, for example, the intercourse of the initiations.

We have seen the complexity of P2's analysis of the third initiation, how its function is argued to be so useful that it could just as well be essential, although that is not stated. The final words, translated above, are the same as at the end of P1, that thus one 'quickly and easily' (*āśutaraṃ sukhātaraṃ ca*; AbhiNir p.358) attains the goal. We will return again to this contrast between a slow and difficult path and the rapid easy Tantric Way which alone (although it should always be borne in mind that 'alone' translates the ambiguous *eva* which could equally be simply an emphasising 'indeed') offers enlightenment in this life.

There are persistent problems in this exegesis of the initiation. Surely such feats of physical and mental mastery are not within the range of a beginner at the point of initiation? How are such a panoply of experiences and associations to be separated out within a single ritual act? And perhaps most problematic of all, what business do those technical conventions have intruding into what should be an exemplary experience of the goal, i.e. a moment of nonduality, beyond every construction of difference?

All Three Bodies Separately

We will have to leave these questions unanswered for the time being, and turn instead to P₃'s perception of what should and does happen in the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, in order to reveal a slightly different argument for its required enactment. P₃ was defined in the introductory verses. It is the position that:

All three Buddha bodies should be separately marked [as the goal, in the third initiation,] by means of the consort.

(*saṃvibhajyātra saṃlakṣyās trayāḥ kāyās tu mudrayā*; AbhiNir v.16ab)

The Dharmakāya is not sufficient

since in the Mahāyāna it is not the only goal, because one can not [act] for the benefit of others by means of that alone.

(*tāvanmātrasya mahāyāne 'śādhyatvāt, tāvanmātreṇa parārthāyogāt*; AbhiNir p.358)

The five Wisdoms are assigned to the three bodies of the Mahāyāna, and then the same is repeated for the Mantranaya (AbhiNir transl. p.334–335), in order to demonstrate that in Tantric practice all three bodies are the goal. The unspoken middle premiss is that the goal of the two traditions cannot be different. The method for its attainment, however, may be. No one would claim that erotic initiation was part of Mahāyāna practice, while it is at the centre of all the positions of our text:

Therefore, when, during the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, the *bodhicitta* [semen] mounts to the jewel [tip] of the penis it should be stabilised right there by the method described above in the second position, according to the [guru's] instructions. Then a mental sensation [of Bliss] is experienced which arises together with that [semen. This sensation is] without distinction with regard to the [apparently distinct] appearance of self and others; [it is] purely the highest Great Bliss, nondual, and in it all

activity [of the senses] has ceased; [it] has transcended verbal discrimination, abides only in sensations of itself, and is [clear] as space. That is the marking of the Dharmakāya. For it is taught in the *Guhyasiddhi* that: ‘As long as the yogin retains his *bodhicitta* [semen], he has an indescribable (*kim apy*) uninterrupted [experience of the] bliss born of the Ānandas.’ (GuSi 8.36cd-37ab)

(*ataḥ prajñābhīṣekakāle vajramaṇiśikharam ārohati bodhicitte tatraive deśe yathopadeśato dvitīyapakṣoktena nyāyena sthīrīkṛte bodhicitte tatsahajabhūtaṃ yat svaparapratibhāsabhedarahitaṃ paramamahāsukhamātram advayaṃ pratyastamitasarvavyāpāraṃ vā-gvikalpātīkrāntarūpaṃ svasaṃvedanaikaṇiṣṭhaṃ mānasam ākāśasaṃkāśaṃ*¹⁹ *vedanam anubhūyate. tad dharmakāyasya lakṣaṇam. tad uktam- yāvan na kurute yogī bodhicittavisarjanam tāvat prāpnoty avicchinnaṃ kim apy ānandajaṃ sukham* (GuSi 8.36cd-37ab). *ibid.* p.359)

As with P2, the protracted orgasmic experience is equivalent to the attainment of the Dharmakāya, or enlightenment. It is the absence of duality, Great Bliss, and the equivalent of the Totally Pure Dharmadhātu Wisdom (*suviśuddhadharmadhātujñāna*; and Akṣobhya). But this lofty abstract absolute is neither sufficient unto the productive fullness of a Bodhisattva’s enlightenment, nor the sum of what happens during the initiatory intercourse:

The experience of the enjoyment of the *bodhicitta* [semen] is the mark of the Enjoyment Body. [It is] experienced in the form of Bliss, externally directed, produced from the contact with the semen moving within the penis, unrestricted in locus but apparently restricted under the influence of its object, [the physical lotus of the consort].

(*yat tu vajrāntaścaladbodhicittasparśasamudbhūtaṃ adeśasthaṃ api pratīniyatadeśam ivāmbanavaśād bahirmukhaṃ sukhākāraṃ bodhicittasambhogajñānaṃ saṃvedyate tat sambhogakāyasya lakṣaṇam*; *ibid.* ctd.)

19 ākāśasaṃkāśaṃ] conj.: MS ākāśaṃ mānasam

The second Buddha body is also implicated, because the non-dual experience is in fact located, just like the Saṃbhogakāya who preaches from his throne in a Buddha field. The transcendent experience of Bliss produces enjoyment, a more tangible mediation of the hypostasis. This is the equivalent of the three wisdoms, Mirror (*ādarśa-*), Equality (*samatā-*), and Investigation (*pratyavekṣaṇā-jñāna*; Vairocana, Ratnasambhava and Amitābha). But still the union is not over, nor the Bodhisattva's wish for the world's well-being fulfilled:

The marking of the Emanation Body is the experiencing by the jewel [glans] of the penis of the complete satisfaction of that [experience], produced by the enjoyment of that semen which is pumped into the consort's vagina.

(*yat tu prajñākamalodaraspharitasya tadbodhicittasambhogena vihitataparitoṣasya vajramaṇinā saṃvedanaṃ nirmāṇakāyasya lakṣaṇam*; ibid. ctd.)

The final Wisdom is that of Service (*krtyānuṣṭhānājñāna*), literally, the carrying out of duty (embodied in Amoghasiddhi). Only the so-called Emanation or manifestation body provides a physical substrate for a Buddha to be instantiated in the world of deluded suffering sentient beings. The climax of sexual intercourse is the 'emanation' of seed, which is naturally assimilated to the coming of a Bodhisattva into physical existence.

Thus all three Bodies are exemplified during the student's initiation, and again, just as P1 and P2 concluded, thanks to this blueprint experience, one can go on to 'quickly and easily attain them' by regular practice thereafter (*sukhataram āśutaram ca kāyatrayapratilambho*²⁰ *bhavati*; ibid. p.359).

The three positions presented so far were all specific to a Yogatantra, namely *Guhyasamāja*, context. Before the final section

20 kāyatraya-] MSpc: MSac kāyatraya-

on the question of how many actually distinct initiations there are in both systems, and after the three positions are briefly reiterated for the Yoginītantras represented by the *Hevajra*, the intervening extended portion of the *Abhiṣekanirukti* discusses the key problem of whether the goal can be said to be blissful. This issue was pointed up right at the beginning in the introductory verses: how then does the erotic bliss of initiation relate to the posited bliss of the goal (cf. vv.2–4, and above p.202)?

Against a Blissful Goal

We saw above an argument based on the unexpressed premiss that the goal in both Tantric Buddhism and the rest of the Mahāyāna must be one and the same; now we will see that claim articulated, to refute the inference that therefore the methods cannot be radically different. Even in Tantric Buddhism, the hypothetical opponent asserts, the fruit is not taught to be Bliss:

One could object that Great Bliss cannot be the goal, [both] because it is not peaceful, and because in this very [context] of the *Hevajratantra* its being the goal is contradicted. For it is taught:

‘Therefore the Blissful [state] is not [credited] with the name “Reality”, for Bliss is [merely] one of the [five] great elements.’ (HT I.x.40cd)

(*nanu na mahāsukhaṃ sādhyam aśāntatvāt, sādhyatvenātraiva hevajratantre dūṣitatvāc ca. yad uktam- tasmāt saukhyaṃ na tattvā-khyaṃ mahābhūtaṃ yataḥ sukham* (HT I.x.40cd) *iti*; AbhiNir p.360)

The immediately preceding half-verse of the *Hevajra* identifies which of the prosaic elements bliss is equivalent to, namely:

Space, because it is wrapped up in [all] five [elements]

(*saukhyam ākāśadhātuś ca pañcabhiḥ pariveṣṭitaḥ*; HT I.x.40a)

As the second half of the line indicates, space is perhaps the least mundane of the elements, because least particular or dualist. As a concept it would be most similar to the Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*). Moreover, the context of the *Hevajra* verse is near the end of the chapter on initiations (*abhiṣekapaṭala*), and specifically, within a passage which makes the same analysis of sexual intercourse (*bolakakkolayoga*; HT I.x.38a) into the elements as was given in P2:

From contact with the quality of hardness therein, the [element] earth arises, and from the flow of *bodhicitta* [semen] the element water (and so on).

(*sparsāt kāṭhinyadharmeṇa pṛthivī tatra jāyate
bodhicittadravākārād abdhātoś caiva sambhavaḥ*... HT I.x.38cd–39ab ff.)

Nevertheless, the scriptural citation does appear to contradict the claim that bliss can be the true Reality (*tattva*).

Sujayaśrī himself answers the objection later in the text:

And, as for what has been said [above, that] in the *Hevajra* [tantra] itself it is contradicted that Bliss is the goal, that too is mistaken. For in that [line,] it is not Great Bliss, undefiled [and clear] as space that is rejected as the goal. What is [rejected there] then, [you may well ask? The Lord Hevajra] rejected that [bliss of sexual union as the goal] because he was concerned lest someone suspect that [such an] example bliss, defiled [and] perishable, should be the goal.

(*yad apy uktam hevajra eva sukhasya sādhyatvaṃ dūṣitam iti tad
apy ayuktam. na hi tatrānāsravasyākāśasaṃkāśasya*²¹ *mahāsukhasya
sādhyatvaṃ nirākṛtam. kiṃ tarhi? dṛṣṭāntasukhasya sāsravasya*²²
sāpāyasya sādhyatvaśaṅkā kasyacit syād ity āśaṅkya tan nirākṛtam;
AbhNir ibid. p.363)

21 anāsravasyākāśasaṃkāśasya] conj.: MS anāsravasyānākāśasaṃkāśasya

22 sāsravasya] corr.: MS sāvasrasya

Thus Sujayaśrī had set his imaginary opponent up for a fall, by having him cite a scriptural line, but out of context. When the textual circumstances are finally taken into account, if indirectly by Sujayaśrī, they turn out to demonstrate that the objection merely supports our text's thesis, that erotic initiation provides a realisation like the goal, very close to it, but not the same. The first brings temporary bliss, but that is useful only as an exemplary experience of the Great Bliss which is indeed undying and quite capable of being the ultimate fruit.

The opponent continues, as yet unaware of the flaws in his argument, with the false inference that a unitary effect must have a unique cause:

Another [reason bliss cannot be related to the goal] is because in [texts and traditions] of the Way of Perfections, such as the Perfection of Wisdom, only the non-dual is taught as the goal. For, even if there is a difference between the Ways (or: methods *naya*) [of Perfections and Mantras], their [positions with regard to] reality cannot be different, because of the unwanted consequence that there would not be [one true] reality.

(*pāramitānaye ca prajñāpāramitādāv advayamātrasyaiva sādhyatvenokteḥ. na hi nayabhede 'pi tattvaṃ bhidyate 'tattvaprasaṅgāt.*
ibid. p.360)

Reality can be only one, it is assumed, and the Pefection Way emphatically does teach the truth. No scriptural citation is adduced to support this position, for it is taken as read, just as in the earlier extended analysis of Tripiṭakamāla we studied above (*ekārthatve 'pi* etc.; cf. p.98ff.). This time the objection is itself countered on the spot: the problem is that conventionally, dissimilar methods inevitably produce dissimilar results:

Surely, [one may object,] there must be a difference in fruits if there is a difference in means. For [in daily life] one sees that

from different causes come different fruits, as for example [is the case with the different seeds] of rice shoots and barley shoots. Otherwise it would necessarily follow that [those specific causes] could not be productive.

(*nanūpāyabhede katham na phalabhedah. dr̥ṣṭo hi hetubhedāt phalabhedah. tathā hi śālyāṅkurayavāṅkurayoḥ. anyathājanakatvāpattir iti. AbhiNir ibid. ctd.*)

In Tripiṭakamāla's verse, taken up as a slogan by many subsequent authors, the initial concession is that the two systems, of Perfections and Mantras, share a single goal, i.e. ultimate reality is the same. But this is followed by what distinguishes them consisting precisely of a difference in methods. The objection to the opponent is dealt with by pointing out that the apparent contravention of conventional laws of causation is here irrelevant because the causality of enlightenment is about attaining a goal, it is argued, not developing or transforming innate potential:

[But this analogy, and hence the argument,] do not apply. [For,] a difference in causes brings about a difference in fruits when the fruit is developmental or transformational, but not when it is something to be attained. For such a fruit, a difference in means brings about a difference only in [the manner of] its attainment, not in its nature.

(*tan na. vivartyasya vikāryasya vā phalasya hetubhedād bhedo bhavati, na tu prāpyasya. tasya prāptimātram upāyabhedād bhidyate na svarūpam. ibid. ctd.*)

Since the disjunction between the goal and its absence is so radical, one should not seek, let alone despair not to find, a relationship such as obtains between seed and shoot (a developmental fruit) or clay and pot (a transformational fruit). In other words, the situation is much as it seemed to the pagan Roman senator Symmachus when he appealed to the Senate's Christian majority against the destruction of the pagan Altar of Victory:

How can something so great be reached by just one way? (*Relatio* 3, ch. 9; BARROW 1973)

The difficulty with the claim that the fruit is not a developmental or transformational one is that we would normally understand enlightenment in both halves of the Mahāyāna to indeed be the result of developing or transforming one's innate potential for perfection. The only solution is that this should nevertheless be seen as more of a conceptual (let alone ontological) leap than the result of a mechanical process.

The argument here concludes that a difference in means is no bar to a shared single goal. Whatever the method to attain it, the goal of Tantric Buddhism can and indeed should be one and the same as that of the Mahāyāna. And so, Mahāyāna attributes of the goal, such that it is nondual and not Blissful, must apply equally in Tantric Buddhism.

This premiss regarding incompatibility between bliss and the Mahāyāna goal will be the first to be challenged in Sujayaśrī's text, and at the greatest length, only after the whole argument has been made. Hence we too will postpone our discussion of the counterargument until the opponent has finished putting his case.

For the moment the opposition continues to base its argument on this contestable premiss. Since the third initiation includes the experience of Bliss, which cannot be predicated of enlightenment, then its design precludes an exemplary glimpsing of the goal:

After all, in this Mahāyāna, there is no difference, in that the [shared] principal goal to be attained has the form of the Dharmakāya, of one essence with the light [of pure consciousness, clear] as space, [and] unconditioned. Therefore, since the [aforementioned Great Bliss] is not the goal, the [goal] should not be marked at the time of the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation. Nor should that [Dharmakāya which is the goal] 'be marked between the Highest and Cessation Joys,' for then the form of Bliss is over-

whelming. [A final reason is that] there is no experience then of the ultimate Release (*nirvṛti*), whose flavour is peace alone, [and] is characterised by satisfaction (*kṛtakṛtyatā*).

*(iha tu mahāyāne prakāśaikaṛasam ākāśasaṃkāśaṃ dharmakā-
yarūpam asaṃskṛtaṃ sādhyam pradhānam prāpyam iti na bhedaḥ.
ata evāsādhyatvāt tasya na prajñājñānābhīṣekakāle tal lakṣaṇīyam.
nāpi paramavīramayor madhye tal lakṣyam, idānīm sukhākārasyā-
tibahalatvāt, paramanirvṛteḥ praśamamātrarasāyāḥ kṛtakṛtyatā-
lakṣaṇāyās tadānīm asaṃvedanāc ca. AbhNir ibid. ctd.)*

Not only does the passionate and hence blissful experience of the third initiation not allow the goal to be marked therein, but that part of the process of initiation is said to be unsatisfactory because it does not grant release, consisting of peace and a sense of fulfillment. Those features would seem to belong not to the moment of orgasm ('when the form of Bliss is overwhelming'), but would postdate the sexual union. The same expression as 'fulfillment' here is, moreover, one of the three marks of attaining arhatship in the standard Pāli canonical account:

[I have] destroyed [re-]birth, lived the chaste life, done what has to be done.

(khīṇā jāti vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ; Vin i.14, D i.84 etc., cf. s.v. arahant PTSD).

Sujayaśrī inserts into the opponent's argument an unmarked quotation of a crucial phrase from the tradition which explicitly locates the goal 'between the Highest and Cessation Joys'. It was quoted in full earlier in the *Abhiṣekanirukti*:

One should perceive that which is to be marked [i.e. the goal] between the Highest and Cessation [*ānandas*, and then] consolidate it.

(paramavīramayor madhye lakṣyam vīkṣya dṛḍhikuru; AbhiNir p.360).

This immediately preceded our objection here, within a minor position the one should mark two Bodies, Dharma and Sambhoga, in anticipation of the goal. The phrase ‘after the sighting of the goal’ (*lakṣyaṃ vīkṣya*) is of unknown provenance but quoted in many texts, such as the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* (KriSaṃPañ 512; cf. above p.199 and p.209, where, however, we retained the reading *lakṣaṃ*). It may well be the source of the tradition followed by Sujayaśrī that one should get the goal into one’s sights. His citation of the line is introduced with the highest approval in his entire treatise:

This [pair of Bodies] should be marked between the Highest and Cessation [Joys]. That is the opinion of those who know reason and scripture. For it is taught that...

(*etac ca paramaviramayor madhye lakṣaṇīyam ity uktiyuktivido manyante. yad āha—* AbhiNir p.360)

Meanwhile the point about the present argument is that it is after all not a straightforward objection to erotic initiation itself, but the claim for a different sort of goal and later, one which can and should be marked only *after* the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation:

Therefore, one should mark the Highest Release at the end of the Cessation [Joy. It is] characterised by satisfaction, having the single flavour of peace alone. [One can do this when] satisfied through the destruction of [both] passion and dispassion, with all notions destroyed, [and] in union with the *samaya* consort (or: equipped with consort and pledges). For it is taught in the Tantra that:

‘[The highest goal] is established at the end of the Cessation [Joy] (GuSi 3.8b).’

So say certain teachers.

(*tas mād viramānte rāgavirāgaḥ sayāt kṛtakṛtyaḥ*²³ *saṃhṛtasakala-vikalpaḥ samayamudrāsaṃyuktaḥ kṛtakṛtyatālakṣaṇāṃ parama-*

23 kṛtakṛtyaḥ] corr.: MS kṛtakṛtyaṃ

*nirvṛtiṃ praśamamātraikarasam*²⁴ *samlakṣayet. tad uktam tantraviramānte vyavasthitam* (GuSi 3.8b) *iti kecid ācāryāḥ*; AbhiNir *ibid.* ctd.)

The requisite setting of one's sights by means of an exemplary experience of the goal is still to be achieved through sexual union, but according to this position the crucial experience is post-orgasmic. The ultimate aim is not to realise eternal bliss, but to realise eternal satisfaction, the peace which comes after, and presumably only by means of the passionate crisis. Here bliss and peace are mutually incompatible. The so-called scriptural authority has in fact only been traced to the same *Guhyasiddhi* we studied above, not a tantra, nor even part of the Yoginī tantric system epitomised by the *Hevajra* which is currently under consideration in this text, but belonging to the *Guhyasamāja* matrix of the Yoga tantra class. Nevertheless, the force of the argument is that yes, sexual initiation is essential to higher Tantric Buddhism, but as a necessary means to the end of post-orgasmic satisfaction.

The Goal is Bliss

The following pages of the *Abhiṣekanirukti* (transl. p.339–342) are dedicated to disproving the preceding argument against bliss being the goal (*tan na yuktam ity anye*; p.361), and hence locating the example goal again within the intercourse of the third initiation. This precedes the final extended section on just how many initiations there are (*nanu śrīsamājādaṃ yogatantravajrādaṃ ca yoginītantravajrādaṃ 'bhīṣekā abhipretāḥ*; p.364), and, more to the point, in what they consist.

We have already seen the brief refutation of the equally brief first part of the opponent's argument, that the *Hevajra* supports his refusal to accept Bliss as the goal. His other two claims were more detailed, as are their rejection. First is the question of

24 praśama-] cf. TibII rab tu gsal ba, i.e. *prakāśa

whether bliss is predicated of the goal in the Mahāyāna, followed by the countering of the objection about the *Hevajra* line, and then lastly the scripturally endorsed location of the exemplary blissful experience of the goal within the third initiation.

The first claim of the objection does not hold:

For in all the Mahāyāna the goal is indeed Great Bliss, whose single flavour is peace, because, just like the light, Bliss too is the nature of the unobscured mind. For a thing's unobstructed form, [if it has one,] is its nature.

(*tathā hi praśamaikarasaṃ*²⁵ *mahāsukham eva sarvatra mahāyāne sādhyam prakāśavat sukhasyāpy*²⁶ *anāvaraṇacittaprakṛtitvāt. tathā hi yad yasyābādhitam rūpam tasya sā prakṛtiḥ. AbhiNir p.361*)

The Mahāyāna is indeed the standard against which Tantric theory should be judged. There is no question but that the two traditions must have a compatible concept of the nature of the one true goal. The question is whether bliss can be predicated of the goal according to Mahāyāna philosophy in the first place. Bliss is as innate to enlightened being as the light of unimpeded consciousness (*prakāśa*).

That light is of paramount importance in late Yogācāra-Mādhyamika (and cf. above p.108 for refs. to *prabhāsvara* in Dharmakīrti, and *prabhāsvara* in the Pāli Canon). Even in late Vedānta one finds the term *prakāśādvaita* 'non-duality of the light', referring to the non-duality of phenomena (fr. Gk *phainomai* appear) which nonetheless, as phenomena, appear to be dual. Such a metaphor for the immediacy of being, which is experienced as a psychological fact by the meditator, helps to explain in what sense things are as real as they appear to be. They are real precisely because they appear, *qua prakāśa*, the innate radiant nature which is

25 cf. Tib II *prakāśa-

26 sukha-] but cf. Tib II *mahā-

the essence of the immediacy of phenomena and their appearance as such. But can the same non-dual ultimacy be ascribed to bliss?

Surely, [one might here object,] it has not been demonstrated that [Bliss] is the unobstructed [nature of the unobscured mind;] for the form 'Bliss' too is obstructed, by [virtue of its] separation from [the conventional ontological qualifications] one [or] many, like the form 'blue.' Thus, just as this form blue shines forth in a spatial dimension, so too does the form Bliss. That is why someone hot in the summer heat feels bliss in only as many parts of the body as are plunged into [cool]²⁷ water.

(*nanv abādhitatvam asiddham, nīlākāravat*²⁸ *sukhākārasyāpy ekā-nekaviyogena bādhyamānatvāt. tathā hi yathāyaṃ nīlākāro deśavitā-nena prakāśate tathā sukhākāro 'pi. yato grīṣmātapasaṃtaptasya yāvanty aṅgāny apsu majjanti, tāvatsv eva sukham upalabhyata iti*; AbhiNir *ibid.* p.362)

Who says bliss is the unobstructed nature of the unobscured mind, the opponent interrupts? Is it not as dualistic as the property 'blue', for example, bound by the spatial extension of its subject, a 'blue bus' etc? Is it not common-sense that bliss is similarly only felt in those limbs, one or many, which are refreshed by cool water in the hot summer, and so cannot have ultimate existence in the way *prakāśa* and Enlightenment do? Already, we may note that such a distinction runs counter to the description given by the historical Buddha himself of *nibbāna*: it is like

what a hot, tired and thirsty man feels if he can find a lovely cool pool and plunge into it, drink, and then relax in the adjacent wood. (above p.42, MN i.76)

[But] this [argument against Bliss being the unobstructed nature of the unobscured mind] is wrong. For in that [example of physical refreshment] there is the shining forth in a spatial

²⁷ cf. Tib II bsil ba'i

²⁸ nīlākāravat] corr.: MS nīlākāravat

dimension of the object of a tactile experience, which is a special kind of internal object of touch, [and] not of bliss, because [that bliss] is characterised only by being something favourable, and because one cannot apply the argument to [bliss of refuting its being] one or many, [and therefore one cannot prove it to be nonexistent]. Hence, since the nature of the unobscured mind is also the form Bliss, like the light, where there is [Bliss] there can be no dimming of the [light].

(tan na yuktam. tatra hy antahsprāṣṭavyaviśeṣasya sparśajñānā-lambanasya deśavitānena prakāśo na sukhasyānugrahakākāramā-tralakṣaṇatvāt. tatra caikānekavicārāyogāt. tasmāt prakāśākāravat sukhākāro 'py anāsravasya cittasya prakṛtir iti na tasmin sati tasyā-pāyah; AbhiNir ibid. ctd.)

The example does not demonstrate that bliss is merely relative to a particular restricted locus, because in the case of the body in water it is not the bliss which is localised, but rather the physical sensation generated within certain limbs, which in turn causes the person to experience unrestricted relief. The proponent of a blissful goal has shown how logically, in Mahāyāna terms, bliss can be an attribute of the ultimate nonduality, and so should be cultivated in Tantric Buddhism. Now he explains for what reason that truth would have been expressly disguised in those earlier teachings:

Nor, even in the [teachings of] the Way of Perfections, is the goal, namely the Dharmakāya, nothing but peace [and] separate from the form bliss. Rather, the Lord realised that there were those who could be disciplined [unto Enlightenment] by dispassion [alone,] who were afraid because of feeling that where there is bliss there lurks passion. [So,] concealing [from them] its blissful form he taught the goal to be nothing but peace, non-dual, pure light [and] characterised by the Perfection of Wisdom. But he [also] perceived people who could be disciplined [unto Enlightenment] by means of great passion, [and so] in the Mantranaya revealed

the goal to have indeed the form of the highest Great Bliss, not illuminated [by anything other than itself, clear] as space, having peace as its nature, pure light [and] non-dual. [Between these two teachings] there is no contradiction.

(na ca pāramitānaye 'pi praśamaikarasam sukhākārarahitam dharma-kāyākyam sādhyam. kiṃ tu virāgavineyānām yatra sukham tatra rāgo 'nuśeta iti bhayam utpadyata iti bhagavatā sukhākāram saṃgopya praśamaikarasam advayam prakāśamātram prajñāpāramitālakṣaṇam sādhyam darśitam. mantranaye tu mahārāgavineyam lokam avalokyādvayam prakāśamātram praśamaikarasam ākāśasamkāśam aprakāśyam paramamahāsukhākāram eva sādhyam saṃprakāśitam iti na kaścid virodhaḥ; AbhiNir ibid. p.362)

Not only did the Buddha have to conceal the truth from certain candidates for enlightenment, lest they be terrified and confused by the implications of bliss being a positive factor, but that skilful gesture found its counterbalance in the revelation of the full blissful glory of the goal to another class of practitioners, in Tantric Buddhism. There is here no judgement of which is a more valid method. It is simply a fact of the diversity of human nature that while some are to be trained by dispassion, others are susceptible to training by great passion, an inclination selfconsciously greater than mere and unhealthy passion. Even that classification of candidates between the two traditions is not exclusive, because in the Mahāyāna too there is a high place granted to Great Bliss, albeit not the very highest:

Moreover, in the Way of the Perfections too [the goal] is tremendous [and] peaceful Great Bliss, even not taking into account [what happens at] the [highest, tenth] Buddha stage without obstructions. This [Bliss] is said to be Great [already] at the eighth Bodhisattva Stage. For it is taught—
‘Through that [knowledge free of mental constructions (*nirvikalpa-jñānāt*, in the previous verse)] the Bodhisattva attains Bliss

without mental construction, peaceful, unwavering, the best, under control, [and both] like and unlike [other blisses].’ (*Avikalpa-praveśadhāraṇī*)

(*kiṃ ca pāramitānaye ’py āstāṃ tāvad buddhabhūmau nirāvara-
ṇāyāṃ atimahat praśamamahāsukham. Bodhisattvabhūmāv evāṣ-
ṭamyāṃ mahad idam ucyate.*²⁹ *tad uktam- praśāntam acalaṃ śreṣ-
ṭhaṃ vaśavartī samāsamam nirvikalpasukhaṃ tasmād bodhisattvo
’dhigacchati* (*Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*) *iti*; AbhiNir *ibid.* ctd.)

Blissfulness is already present in the lower, eighth, Bodhisattva stage, Unwavering (*acalā*), which is agreed to be an irreversible attainment (sometimes the seventh is already considered in those terms; cf. Williams 1989:212), let alone the highest *Bodhisattvabhūmi* Dharma Cloud (*dharmameghā*). Scriptural endorsement is found in the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*, no longer extant in Sanskrit but quoted in Ratnākaraśānti’s *Guṇavatī* commentary on the *Mahāmāyātāntra* (*Guṇavatī* p.16) as well as by Atiśa. Similar reference could have been made to, for example, *Sukhāvatī*, the world of Amitābha (or Amitāyus), whence comes Avalokiteśvara. *Sukhāvatī* is called the place of bliss, but is not a goal in itself, only a place of auspicious rebirth where one has the chance to hear Amitābha’s preaching and thence be one step closer to enlightenment. Of more negative value to the present position is that the very first of the Bodhisattva stages is known as ‘Joyful’ (*pramuditā*), although that does not have the term for bliss (*sukha*).

Having shown that the Mahāyāna supports the claim that Bliss is the goal, next (as we have already seen above, p.235) the proponent refutes the argument from the *Hevajra* verse, to show that there too Bliss can be the goal, though that is importantly different from the impermanent bliss experienced in sexual union. Finally, he contorts Sanskrit usage to find textual confirmation

29 ucyate] MSac: MSpc uvacyate

that the example of the goal, exemplary bliss, is to be marked during the intercourse of the initiation, and not afterwards:

And as for the statement that it is the state of satisfaction, characterised as the highest Release, which should be marked then [at the end of the Cessation [Joy], and not Great Bliss, because of the phrase: '[The highest goal] is established at the end of the Cessation [Joy] (*viramānte*)' (GuSi 3.8b), that too is wrong. For, in that [phrase,] 'at the time with the Cessation Joy at its end (*viramānte*)' is in fact a *bahuvrīhi* compound. As for the [*Hevajra*] quote: 'But the Innate [Joy] is final' (HT I.viii.32d), that too must be understood to mean that the [Innate Joy] is to be cultivated [at the time with the Cessation Joy at its end, since] 'finally' [means] by elimination, because the [other] three [Joys] are not involved.

(*yad apy uktam— viramānte vyavasthitam* (GuSi 3.8b) *iti pāthāt tatraiva kṛtyakṛtyatā paramanirvṛtilakṣaṇā lakṣaṇīyā na mahāsukham iti tad apy ayuktam, viramānta iti tatraiva bahuvrīhisamāsāt. yad api— saḥajānandaṃ tu śeṣataḥ* (HT I.viii.32d) *ity uktam tad api śeṣataḥ pārīkṣyāt trayāṇām anupayuktatvāt tad eva bhavyam iti boddhavyam*; AbhiNir p.363)

Sujayaśrī is presenting a position which performs an acrobatic exegesis of two telling citations, the second certainly scriptural. It turns out that the opponent's argument that the goal is to be marked after the initiation, 'at the end of the Cessation [Joy]' (*viramānte*) was based on a defective construal of the *Guhyasiddhi* phrase. Whereas one would normally translate the compound as a *tatpuruṣa*, as the objection had, now it is claimed to be in fact a *bahuvrīhi* (not 'at the end of the Cessation Joy', but 'at the time with the Cessation Joy at its end') so that the goal should after all be marked before the Cessation Joy, at the blissful moment of sexual climax. The *Hevajra* line must also be creatively interpreted because the proponent of the current position does not want *śeṣataḥ* to mean 'at the end', for in that case the Innate Joy would

not be experienced earlier, before the Cessation Joy. He has good reason for his sequence of the moments:

Moreover, the [deluded] idea is that at the end of the Cessation Joy one should mark [an experience] like the sky, whose only nature is peace, non-dual, free of [both] verbal expression and desire, [and] without [either] passion or dispassion. But that would be impossible, because at that stage there is no non-dual experience, for the [female,] Wisdom, and the [male,] Means, [once again] perceive manifold objects. Nor is [the experience] free of verbal expression, because one has mental constructions with regard to the plurality of things one has experienced. Nor [indeed] is it without passion and dispassion, because dispassion arises if the bodily fluids have not accumulated, and passion arises again when the bodily fluids have accumulated. And [so the experience] is not without desire, for that same [practitioner who has accumulated his bodily fluids] has a longing for further sexual pleasure.

(kiṃ ca viramānte khasamaṃ praśamaikarasam advayaṃ nirjalpaṃ nirākāṅkṣaṃ rāgavirāgarahitaṃ lakṣaṇīyaṃ iti matam. tac ca na sambhāvyaṭe. yatas tasyāṃ avasthāyāṃ nādvayaṃ jñānaṃ vidyate, prajñopāyayor vicitraṇīyapratibhāsanāt. nāpi nirjalpaṃ anubhūtanekārthavikalpanāt. nāpi rāgavirāgarahitaṃ anupacitadhātor virāgasambhavād upacitadhātoḥ punā rāgasambhavāt. nāpi nirākāṅkṣaṃ tasyaiva punaḥ suratābhilāṣāt. AbhiNir ibid. ctd.)

The proposition that the goal should be marked after the Cessation Joy is untenable because by then the practitioner and his sexual partner are back in the world of normal sense experience, after the culmination of their union. In ordinary life one cannot know the non-dual; only at the particular moment framed in the third initiation do the variety of objects of all the senses fall away. Even straight after that moment passion and dispassion become obstacles once more, either the first when bodily fluids, especially semen, have been accumulated and presumably not yet emitted,

or dispassion as the anticlimax of emission. There is a final potentially circular argument, in that if one can alone experience non-duality, by meditation for example, then what use would a consort be:

If discriminatory appearances [could be made to] fall away [simply] by making the effort to close one's eyes and the [other doors of the senses] and suppressing mental constructions, then employment of the consort would be fruitless, because one could succeed at that [falling away of discriminatory appearances] by [this] other way.

(*caḥsurādinimīlanena prayatnato vikalpaparihāreṇa ca bhedapratibhāsāpagame mudropayogo nihphalaḥ syāt, anyathaiva tatsiddheḥ.* AbhiNir *ibid.* ctd.)

This point has force only within the context of overall agreement that sexual relations are necessary to Tantric Buddhism. The disagreement here is rather about whether to locate the example of the goal during or following that intercourse. Now in the end the shared insistence on erotic practice is turned against the opposition, who wanted to endorse such activity only as the means to a post-coital peaceful satisfaction which anticipates the goal itself:

If [you say] that the state of complete fulfilment, which has the form of Supreme Bliss (or: Release), cannot be attained without enjoyment of the consort's lotus [vagina, we] disagree. For, such a state of complete fulfilment can be produced even by feasting, massage, bathing and so on.

(*na vinā prajñāravindasambhogam paramanirvṛtirūpā kṛtakṛtyatā-sampadyate iti cet, na, bhojanābhyaṅgasnānādibhir*³⁰ *api tādrkṛtakṛtyatotpattēḥ*; AbhiNir *ibid.* ctd.)

30 bhojanābhyaṅgasnānādibhir] corr: MS bhojanādyāṅgasnānādibhir cf. TibI no first ādi, and bsku mye, massage

Satisfaction (*kṛtakṛtyatā*), it is objected, does not depend uniquely on prior sexual relations, in unspoken contrast to bliss and non-duality. The implication is that even the opponent would not want to abandon such relations, which are thus apparently indispensable. Of course, so long as we cannot identify a historical author of the opposing argument, we dare not ascribe too much value to its testimony. The alternative methods of producing calm fulfilment are however very much the same as those one might propose as means to some bliss on the road to satisfaction.

One gets the impression here that the erotic form of initiation and practice hardly even needs to be justified, it is uncontroversial dogma. All that remains to be argued about is the precise moment and function of the experience which will enable one to attain enlightenment. For now, as Sujayaśrī will say, this particular argument has gone on long enough, and scripture trumps no end of reasoning:

Enough of all this detailed [refutation of the objection.] For, [the Lord] said:

‘The goal of the Yoginītantra[s] is Great Bliss, namely the Innate [Joy]. One should make an effort and mark [the exemplary experience of the goal], after the Highest [Joy,] and before the Cessation [Joy].’

(*alam ativistareṇeti. āha ca—
tat sādhyam yoginītantra saḥajākhyam mahāsukham
paramānte bhavel lakṣyam viramādaḥ ca yatnataḥ iti. ibid. ctd.*)

The final citation from scripture sums up what is apparently our author’s position, that Great Bliss, the Innate Joy, is the goal, and that it is exemplified in the brief moment between the Highest and Cessation Joys. The verse is also quoted in Rāmapāla’s commentary on the *Sekanirdeśa* (SeNirPañ f.8v, according to ISAACSON).

The concluding section of the *Abhiṣekanirukti* discusses the number of initiations, presenting different positions that struggle to make sense of the mysterious fourth: ‘that again thus’ (*tat punas tathā*; GST 18.113f). We have referred to passages from this section before (cf. above p.211), with regard to the idea that the fourth is the verbal explanation that the experience of the third is a marking of the goal, with which that experience has the relationship of example to exemplified. The text is about initiation and not post-initiatory Tantric practice, but it never doubts the requirement to take the initiations first. We have been considering the precise details of what is supposed to happen during the third initiation in particular, according to a variety of positions which are more or less closely related.

Sujayaśrī concludes his whole analysis with seven verses. In the first and the third he remarks that:

It is up to scholars to select the correct [position].

(*yukto grāhyas tu paṇḍitaiḥ*. concl. v.1d)

and:

The wise should choose [which is] correct.

(*yukto grāhyo manīṣibhiḥ*. concl. v.3d)

At the beginning of our investigation into whether sexual initiation is required for Tantric Buddhism we saw the rulings of Vāgīśvarakīrti (with ref. to the *Guhyasamāja*), and of Kuladatta and finally Abhayākaragupta (in their all-purpose ritual manuals). In contrast to his two predecessors, Abhayākara had given a reason why the higher initiations were required, namely that without the experience generated therein one would not be able to go on to discuss reality. We started our discussion of the *Abhiṣekanirukti* at that point, since Sujayaśrī’s understanding seemed quite close to that of Abhayākara, and may indeed have inspired him.

We will conclude our study of this first question of three with the pronouncements of an author who certainly predates Abhayākara and is likely to have been a contemporary of Ratnākaraśānti in Vikramaśīla, Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna. Atiśa may indeed have been Ratnākaraśānti's student (cf. e.g. RUEGG 1981b:111).

This famous princely Bengali monk was called to Tibet in 1042 AD by the Western king Byang chub 'od precisely to restore order to religious society. We have the ordinance (*bka' shog*) published earlier (c.980 AD; KARMAY 1980:152) by that king's great-uncle, lHa bla ma Ye shes 'od, which strongly criticises the Tantric practice of the time. This was not the first time that Tantric teaching came under restriction by royal orders, however:

At the beginning of the ninth century AD, when King Khri lde srong btsan (b.776) gave orders (*bkas bcad*) to revise the Tibetan literary language, tantric terms were not to be collected and included in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* in spite of the fact that there were a number of tantras that had already been translated, mostly belonging to the groups of Kriyā and Caryā tantras. (KARMAY 1981:193–194)

Atiśa is supposed to have written his *Bodhipathapradīpa* (*Byang chub lam sgron*), 'Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment', in response to seven questions of Byang chub 'od, including:

whether Buddhist monks were allowed to practise certain tantric teachings. (KARMAY 1980:152)

This last will itself be our next general question, but intrudes already here.

Our first two questions are in many respects so closely related as to be inextricable one from the other. Asking whether the initiations are necessary for Tantric Buddhism, begs the request for clarification 'For whom?' We have left this question unasked, and will save it for yet just a little while longer.

Atiśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa* survives, with its prose auto-commentary (*pañjikā*), only in their Tibetan translations. The translation of the first is said to have been made by Atiśa himself together with the Tibetan translator Dge ba'i blo gros (colophon BoPaPra 141). The commentary is said to have been translated by the author Atiśa again and Tshul khriims rgyal ba.

David Seyfort RUEGG has, however, questioned the traditional attribution of the commentary, entitled in the Tibetan colophons *Bodhimārgadīpapañjikā*:

A cause de certains passages du commentaire qui contiennent des remarques contestables, on s'est posé la question de savoir si Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna en est vraiment l'auteur. (1981a:212, fn. 2)

But in contrast, my analysis will depend on the unproven working hypothesis that the commentary is key to understanding the primary verses, that both were indeed composed by a single author, and that the 'contestable remarks' of the commentary are required in order to offset the deliberate exclusion of controversy from the root text.

There the penultimate verse asserts that:

One who has received the *ācāryābhīṣeka* may hear and explain all the Tantras and perform *homa* ritual and so on. Provided he has correct knowledge of reality there is no fault.

(*rgyud kun nyan dang 'chad pa dang*
sbyin sreg mchod sbyin sogs byed pa
slob dpon dbang bskur rnyed 'gyur zhing
de nyid rig la nyes pa med. v.67 BoPaPra 138)

It appears that Atiśa is saying that the teacher initiation is sufficient entitlement to all Tantric practices, but in the auto-commentary he prefaces his section on the Mantranaya with a quiet yet telling qualification.

After 59 verses on the Śrāvaka- and Mahā-yānas, Tantric Buddhism is treated in just 8. The prose commentary introduces the

Tantric better half of the Mahāyāna with the famous verse of Tripiṭakamāla (*ekārthatve 'pi...*), followed by prescribing first of all the generation of the thought of enlightenment. Atiśa admits that he has:

however, not here discussed the meaning of such texts,
(*'on kyang 'dir ni de lta bu'i gzhung gi don ni bdag gis ma brjod do*; BoPaPraPañ D f286b5)

but has instead:

here presented, as a basis, a little of the method for a Bodhisattva in the generation stage (*bskyed pa'i rim pa, utpattikrama*) to acquire the two accumulations [of merit and wisdom]. I shall write here just relying on the basis.

(*'dir ni bskyed pa'i rim pa la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa'i tshogs gnyis bsags pa'i thabs cung zhig rtsa bar yang bkod cing 'dir yang rtsa ba la brten pa tsam zhig bri bar bya'o*; BoPaPraPañ *ibid.* ctd.)

This framing restriction to generation stage (*utpattikrama*) practice means that every one of Atiśa's pronouncements here can by exclusion be assumed not to apply to one engaged in more advanced, completion stage (*niṣpannakrama*) practice. Similarly, he twice says that he is dealing with the basics. Thus although Atiśa goes on to rule that the teacher initiation is enough to qualify one for what appeared to include all Tantric practice, he may as well have held his fingers crossed behind his back, so limited has he made the application of his verses. We will see that this qualification is particularly relevant to our next title question, about monastic eligibility.

Moreover, the sequence of verses, and the prose context of our verse 67 above, reveal what is the overriding preoccupation behind the permission to practise being granted to someone who has taken only the *ācāryābhiṣeka*. Verses 64–66 forbid the taking of the higher initiations by a celibate, i.e. a monk. We shall shortly return

to that important section, but meanwhile our verse is introduced with the related words:

In that case, if [the higher initiations are off limits to a celibate,] surely it is not possible for celibates to engage in *mantra* [practice, you] may well ask. [My] response is:

‘One who has received the *ācāryābhīṣeka* may hear and explain all the Tantras and perform *homa* ritual and so on.’ (v.67ac)

(*de ltar yin na tshangs par spyod pa dag gis gsang sngags la ’jug tu mi rung ngo zhe na—*

rgyud kun nyan dang ’chad pa dang

sbyin sreg mchod sbyin sogs byed pa

slob dpon dbang bskur rnyed ’gyur pa— zhes bya ba ’di smos so;

BoPaPraPañ D f.290b4–5).

Atiśa sets his own ruling that the teacher initiation is sufficient entitlement to Tantric practice in the context of a response to the objection that monks could not engage in Tantric practice if they were not permitted to take the higher initiations. He might be hinting that this pronouncement has been squeezed out of him, as a consequence of the prohibition on monks taking the higher initiations, which we know was what his royal patrons wanted him to legislate for.

In neither verse nor auto-commentary is any mention made of enlightenment. What the teacher initiation entitles one to may be considered rather preliminary on the path, just as one could judge the almost identical entitlements allowed by Vāgīśvarakīrti and Kuladatta above, to hear and explain mantra and tantra, and do mantra practice (cf. above p.198). Only Abhayākara was to go so far as to differentiate carefully between entitlements to the (non-soteriological) Kriyā and Caryā tantras, entitlements based on just the preliminary initiations, while asserting that for Yoga and Yoginī tantric practice the third initiation is indispensable (cf. above p.199), for reasons close to those discussed at length by

Sujayaśrīgupta, namely the exemplary experience of the goal that initiation provides.

Following the relevant three lines of his verse, Atiśa goes on to gloss:

If a celibate *mantrin* wants to listen to the Tantras and so on, explain them to others, and see (*blta ba*) [the *maṇḍala*], perform *homa*, *bali* and [*mantra*] recitation, then all the Tantras and all the *maṇḍala* rituals clearly say that he may, [provided] he has the vase initiation known as the initiation of the teacher.

(*gal te tshangs par spyod pa'i sngags pas rgyud la sogs pa nyan pa dang, gzhan la 'chad pa dang, blta ba dang, sbyin sreg dang, gtor ma dang, bzlas brjod dag byed par 'dod na ni slob dpon dbang bskur zhes pa bum pa'i dbang gis rung ba rgyud thams cad dang, dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga thams cad nas gsal bar gsung so*; BoPaPraPañ *ibid.* ctd.)

Like Atiśa, Kuladatta also seemed to make the vase initiation equivalent to that of the teacher. Only after his account of the teacher initiation did he say that:

The vase initiation purifies the body. Once a student has received the initiation of the vase he should ask for the secret initiation.

(... *ity ācāryābhiṣekaḥ. kalāśābhiṣekeṇa kāyaviśodhanam. kalāśābhiṣekaprāptaḥ śiṣyo guhyābhiṣekaṃ prārthayet.*; KriSaṃPañ 512, cf. above p.196)

In the seminal *Guhyasamāja* verse, the first of the four initiations is indeed that of the vase, not that of the teacher (*kalāśābhiṣekaṃ prathamam* 18.113c).

Atiśa next quotes, as often in this section of the text, his

teacher, the monk Painḍapātika of Yavadvīpa of the same opinion who says, amongst many other things:

‘... In that case, [you may object,] householders also need not take the Secret and Wisdom Initiations. Not only do they not need to take them, but they are forbidden to do so’.

(*'di'i don bla ma dge slong bsod snyoms pa ya ba dvi pas*³¹
gsung te—... de lta na khyim pa dag la yang gsang ba dang shes rab
kyi dbang dgos pa med par 'gyur ro zhe na, de mi dgos pa yang
yin la, de las bzlog pa yang yin no- zhes bya ba la sogs pa rgyas
par gsungs so; BoPaPraPañ *ibid.* ctd.) The quotation is in fact
 more of a paraphrase or synopsis of his teacher Painḍapātika
 (=Maitripa)'s short text 'Initiation Set Forth' [i.e. *Sekanirdeśa*]
 (SHERBURNE 1983:186 fn.30,32; for discussion of the identity of
 this Painḍapātika cf. RUEGG 1981a:217–219).

With this passage we have reached our first strong objection to the higher initiations, an objection inferred *a fortiori* from monastics to include even householders. Up until now we have only been considering how different authors allocated a greater or lesser entitlement to preliminary initiation, nevertheless making it obvious that the higher initiations are indispensable on the path to enlightenment. But in Atiśa's well known text the difficulties involved when the candidate for the initiations is a celibate monk have become central to our first question: 'Is sexual initiation required in Tantric Buddhism?' As we have known all along, that question can hardly stand alone without the second, and so we ask:

31 read with D: P ya ba 'di pas

Are Monks Eligible for Sexual Initiation?

We have seen enough discussion demanding the higher initiations to wonder for ourselves what such texts envisage in the case of a monk who lives according to a strict ethical discipline of restraint, albeit in the Buddha's words a Middle Way, when he is required to transgress one of his vows in the name of a higher purpose. Is he even permitted, as a monk, to transgress? Or is he indeed compelled to transgress, enjoying real sexual relations? We will come to the mainstream apologetic of the Indian texts we have already studied, but first let us continue with Atiśa's work written for a Tibetan audience, to see how he answered our new question. After all, unlike our previous investigation, the current question is one that demanded to be and was explicitly addressed time after time, as soon as Tantric Buddhism had established itself as a method available to monks within regulated institutions.

Atiśa on Monasticism

Atiśa's prohibition on monks taking the higher initiations is a commonplace of the secondary literature. But nowhere have the subtleties of his writing and the context of his autocommentary been taken into account in order to decipher some mild dissimulation on his part. I am grateful to Harunaga ISAACSON for initially drawing to my attention the important proviso about the generation stage with which Atiśa prefaces his chapter on Tantric Buddhism, the qualification we looked at above, that his text offers only 'a basis, a little of the method for a Bodhisattva in the generation stage to acquire the two accumulations' (cf. above p.255). Bearing such advance notification in mind, the well known verses take on a new undertone:

A celibate (*brahmacārin*) should not take the Secret and Wisdom Initiations, because it is strongly prohibited in the *Parmād-*

ibuddhatantra. If a celibate ascetic (**tapasvin*) takes those [two] initiations, his ascetic vows (**samaya*) are broken, by doing what is forbidden. Such a [reprobate] *vratin* commits *pārājika* offences, falls into evil rebirths and thus has no success. (vv.64–66)

(*dang po'i sangs rgyas rgyud chen las*
rab tu 'bad pas bkag pa'i phyir
gsang ba shes rab dbang bskur ni
tshangs par spyod pas blang mi bya.
gal te dbang bskur de 'dzin na
tshangs spyod dka' thub la gnas pa
bkag pa spyad par 'gyur ba'i phyir
dka' thub sdom pa de nyams te.
brtul zhugs can de pham pa yi
ltung ba dag ni 'byung 'gyur zhing
de ni ngan song nges lhung bas
grub pa yang ni yod ma yin. vv. 64–66 BoPaPra 138)

Atiśa cites the *Paramādibuddhatantra*, the hypothetical root text (*mūlatantra*) of the extant *Laghukālacakra*, as scriptural authority for the prohibition on celibates (*brahmacārins*) taking the higher initiations. He is dogmatic that one who has taken such a vow of 'ascetic' restraint would be committing the most heinous of Vinaya offences, the *pārājika* which entails expulsion from the Saṃgha. Hence he must be talking about monks, although he did not say so. One might describe the *Bodhipathapradīpa* itself as a eulogy of celibacy. It begins with 21 introductory verses, of which the punchline is that celibacy is the most excellent virtue of all those regulated in the *prātimokṣa* (v.21), and again celibacy is praised in the long section on the Mahāyāna (v.28). It is interesting that here, in the conservative verses which forbid the higher initiations, Atiśa twice emphasises asceticism (*dka' thub*, **tapas*) as an attribute of the celibate, a feature to which we shall return when we come to other discussions of our question (cf. below p.296ff.).

Introducing the first of these verses (64) in the prose commentary, Atiśa indicates that he is on the defensive:

Now, [my verse] beginning ‘In the *Paramādibuddhatantra*...’ is said in order to refute wrong ideas about the Mantrayāna. These wrong ideas about the Mantra[yāna] are two: illegitimate imputation (transl. RUEGG 1981a:212, **[sam]āropa*) and unjustified rejection (transl. *ibid.*, **apavāda*). The former should be brought into line, and the latter turned around.

(*da ni gsang sngags kyi theg pa la log par rtog pa dag dgag pa'i phyir-dang po'i sangs rgyas rgyud chen las-zhes pa la sogs pa smras te. 'dir gsang sngags la log par rtog pa ni gnyis te: sgro 'dogs par byed pa dang skur pa 'debs pa byed pa'o. snga ma ni tshar gchad par bya'o. phyi ma ni rjes su gzung bar bya'o.* BoPaPraPañ D f.289v3–4)

His treatment of the two misconceptions is quite lengthy (cf. RUEGG's translation 1981a:213–214, and the imperfect translation of SHERBURNE 1983:172–175). What they boil down to is either the deluded superimposition of permissiveness onto the tradition with the claim that any one can do any practice, or hypercorrection in the other direction so that Tantric Buddhism is rejected altogether.

The two errors, *samāropa* and *apavāda*, are themselves the two characteristic extremes of conceptualization or mental construction (*vikalpa*) which a Mahāyāna author such as Kamalaśīla said in his first *Bhāvanākrama* could be cut off with wisdom and means, respectively, thus fully realising the Middle Way (*madhyamā pratipat*) (*anayā ca prajñopāyasvarūpayā pratipadā samāropāpavādāntavivarjanena madhyamā pratipad udbhāvitā. prajñayā samāropāntasya varjanād upāyenāpavādāntasya varjanāt.* Bhā-Kra p.507). The pair corresponds also to two views, of eternalism (*sassatadiṭṭhi*) and annihilationism (*ucchedadiṭṭhi*) of the soul and the world, which the historical Buddha countered in his own definition of his Middle Way.

At all events, Atiśa's commentary urges that both should be countered 'compassionately' (*snying rje'i sems kyis*. BoPaPraPañ-D f.290r5, f.290v3). David Seyfort RUEGG notes (1981a:224) that this allusion to 'compassionate extirpation' may 'silently evoke the theme of compassionate liberation' which we come to now with its alternative name 'murder'.

In verse 66 of the root text, the *pārājika* offences incurred were in the plural (*pham pa yi ltung ba dag*), implying that the vow of celibacy would not be the only one to be broken. In the autocommentary the Four Rites (*zhi ba*, *rgyas pa*, *dbang*, and *mngon spyod* or *drag po*: *catuḥ karmāṇi*: *puṣṭi*, *śānti*, *vaśya*, and *abhicāra* or *māraṇa*; cf. SNELGROVE 1959:I.38) are also several times referred to, because of the associated *pārājika* offence of murder that one of them (*māraṇa*) entails. Thus, within the section on illegitimate imputation, an opponent objects:

'If by enjoying women one incurs the *pārājika* [offence] of *abrahmacarya*, and if by performing fierce magic (**krūrābhicāra*) one incurs the *pārājika* of murder, then one should not engage [at all] in that [Tantric Buddhism].' But those [objectors] are slandering Tantra without understanding its meaning.

(*'di ltar bud med bsten pas ni mi tshangs par spyod pa'i pham pa 'ong la, mngon spyod drag po byas pas ni srog bcad pa'i pham pa 'ong bas de la 'jug par mi bya'o zhes rgyud kyi dgongs pa mi shes par skur pa 'debs pa de dag ni...* BoPaPraPañ D f.290r6)

In order to study Tantric Buddhist Apologetics fully, one would indeed have to treat the magical *catuḥ karmāṇi*, which I regret not to have the opportunity to do in this dissertation. Indeed, the last thing that Atiśa wants is for these rites to be rejected. The first verse of the section on Tantric Buddhism refers approvingly to those same rituals as means to acquire the two Accumulations:

The rites of Pacifying, Prospering, [Overpowering and Destroying] are achieved through the power of *mantra*. By them...

(*sngags mthu nyid las grub pa yi*
zhi dang rgyas sogs las rnam kyis; v.60ab BoPaPra 136).

The first two rites are fairly harmless. The third, ‘overpowering’, is the rite performed for seducing women, i.e. it then entails the breaking of celibacy. The last, ‘killing’, is the cruel rite (*krū-rakarman*, *drag las*). The two together are known in Tibetan as *sbyor sgrol*: sexual union (*sbyor ba*) and ritual murder (*sgrol ba*; cf. the interesting discussion of the Indian and Tibetan historical traditions of this pair in RUEGG 1981a:219–223). SNELLGROVE gives an interpretation of the term ‘killing’ as referring to ‘the slaying of the notion of a self’ (1959:I.38), which may be the acceptable face of what Atiśa had in mind. Thus ‘killing’ does not refer to the murder of a sentient being (although already in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, as we have seen above p.24, that can itself be justified as liberating someone from a karmically negative existence and bumping them onto a happier rebirth). Such metaphorical glosses are central to Tantric Buddhism.

Some would judge our entire project in this thesis to be misguided because based on deluded literal readings of what should instead be interpreted metaphorically. But I repeat that there comes a time when one must take ancient authors at their word, even if their word is all we have. This is especially credible since we can find so much evidence for tensions which could derive only from real positions. As SNELLGROVE puts it:

In this whole setting the rite of *maithuna* ceases to be a matter of concern, and it would be absurd to defend it by pretending that the intention was solely symbolical. Whether performed or not, it is the idea that counts... (1959:I.42)

We will come later to alternative interpretations of the ‘enjoyment of women’, which Atiśa says in his commentary is not properly understood when criticised.

Beyond the breaking of vows and an individual monk’s ejection from the Saṃgha, Atiśa complains about the harm done to the

Dharma itself by false *mantrins* who boast they can get away with murder and lack of self-restraint:

‘We are *mantrins*. We do all practices as we like, and will quickly attain the *siddhi* of *mahāmudrā*.’

They who say and believe this will go to bad rebirths, for: by denigrating the Tathāgata’s words and defiling *brahmacarya* they cause the disappearance of the Buddha’s teaching; and by practising fierce sorcery (**krūrābhicāra*) and resorting to women they commit *pārājika* offences.

(*bdag cag ni gsang sngags pa’o. bdag cag ni spyod pa thams cad bag yangs su byed cing phyag rgya chen po’i dngos grub kyang myur du thob par ‘gyur ro zhes sgrogs shing gnas pa de dag ni ngan ‘gror ‘gro bar ‘gyur te, de bzhin gshegs pa’i bka’ la skur pa btab pa dang, tshangs par spyod pa dag sbags pas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa nub par byas pa dang, mngon spyod drag po byas pa dang, bud med dag bsten bas pham pa byung ba’i phyir ro. BoPaPraPañ ibid. D f.289b5–7*)

Later in the commentary, following the presentation of all three verses (64–66) prohibiting the higher initiations for a celibate candidate, Atiśa paraphrases his teacher’s work again. Painḍapātika says that:

There are two kinds of initiation: those which are for householders, and those which are for celibates.

(*de la dbang ni rnam pa gnyis te: khyim pa’i phyogs la brten pa dang tshangs par spyod pa’i phyogs la brten pa’o. BoPaPraPañ D f.290b7–291a1*).

According to him, it is our higher initiations that are not available to celibates:

Because it is like this: as many virtues as accrue as a result of relying on the Buddha’s *dharma*, all accrue through following that teaching. Following the teaching depends entirely on *brahmacarya*. And the two [higher] initiations are known to be incompatible with *brahmacarya*. Thus, the two initiations bring

an end to *brahmacarya*, and if *brahmacarya* ceases the Buddha's teaching will disappear. By that disappearance the accomplishment of merit will come to an end, and so there will be limitless non-virtuous [factors]. That is why those two [initiations] are excluded for a *brahmacārin*.

(*'di ltar sangs rgyas kyi chos la brten nas dge ba ji snyed cig 'byung ba de dag thams cad ni bstan pa gnas pa las 'byung ba yin la, bstan ba gnas pa yang tshangs par spyod pa kho la ltos shing, dbang bskur ba gnyis ni tshangs par spyod pa'i mi mthun pa'i gnas su mthong ba'i phyir ro. de bas na dbang bskur ba gnyis ni tshangs par spyod pa zad par byed pa yin la, tshangs par spyod pa zad na sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa nub par 'gyur zhing, de nub pas bsod nams mngon par 'du bya ba rnam rgyun chad par 'gyur la, gzhi de la dge ba ma yin pa dpag tu med pa 'byung ba'i phyir de gnyis tshangs par spyod pa rnam la spangs so zhes gsungs so. f291a2–4*)

Not only does Atiśa make the preservation of the vows of a monk depend on excluding the higher initiations from his path, but the whole Buddhist religion as a phenomenon in the world is shown to be dependent on the continuation of celibate careers. The Dharma is embodied in the community of monks and nuns and cannot survive without their maintenance of a celibate ideal. The implication is that Atiśa was writing under circumstances in which the religion, the Dharma, is under threat. That vulnerability is perceived to be causally related to a contemporaneous increase in non-monastic practitioners; they make it happen. A related rhetoric is found in the very tradition chosen by Atiśa as scriptural support, that of the then newly composed *Kālacakra*.

A Kālacakra commentary on the Hevajratantra

Vajragarbha, one of the three self-styled Bodhisattva commentators in the *Kālacakra* tradition, wrote the commentary which interprets the *Hevajra* in the light of the *Kālacakra* teachings. Right at the beginning of that text, he prophesises, retroactively

no doubt:

There will be teachers who will teach the practice of *yoga* (*yogācāra*), propounders of a bad way in this time of the five decays.... Some men will say to their contemporaries that they are holders of the *vajra*, having striven, been initiated and [thus] attained Buddhahood, [i.e.] Vajrasattvahood. [These men will say:] ‘No monks are to be venerated, holders of ethical vows. We ourselves, white-robed [house holders] are venerable; [we are] the *vajra* holders in person on earth.’ ... They disguise their own misdemeanours under the cloak of ‘practising yoga’ (*yogācāra*), and in order to shake them off recite: ‘It is the qualities of a teacher one should notice, never his faults. Students who seize upon his faults will fail; that is certain.’

(*ācāryā ye bhaviṣyanti yogācārasya deśakāḥ*
kāle pañcakaṣāye ‘sminn asanmārgappravartakāḥ. v.7.
buddhatvaṃ vajrasattvatvaṃ sekaiḥ saṃgrhya yatnataḥ
vayaṃ vajradharāḥ kecid vadiṣyanti narā nṛṇām.
avandya bhikṣavaḥ sarve śīlasaṃvaradhāriṇaḥ
sitavastrā vayaṃ vandyāḥ svayaṃ vajradharā bhuvi. vv.10–11.
yogācāraccalenaite gopayitvā svayaṃ kṛtān
doṣān doṣaparityāgakaraṇāya vadanti vai
ācāryasya guṇā grāhyā doṣā naiva kadācana
doṣagrahād¹ asiddhir vai śiṣyāṇāṃ nātra saṃśayaḥ. vv.13–14. Śa-
ṭṣāhasrikā MS Göttingen f.1v4–2r2, MS NAK f.1v5–2r7)

The *Kālacakra* system’s furious attack on the concept of lay Tantric teachers is well known:

[T]here are authorities, such as the Vimalaprabhā commentary on the Kālacakratāntra, which condemn the practice of monks venerating married Vajra Masters [*grhasthācārya*] as their gurus if any ordained Vajra Master is available, and of married Vajra Masters being engaged as officiants for such rituals as the consecration of monasteries. The text insists that it is the duty of

1 doṣagrahād] corr.: MS doṣagrahaṇaṃ.

the king to ensure that this hierarchical distinction between the white-robed and the red-robed Vajra Masters is preserved, and compares the situation in India, where this distinction was obviously precarious, with that in China [*mañjuśrīviṣaya*]. There, he says, the Emperor sees to it that any novice or monk who is guilty of a grave transgression [*pārājika*] is stripped of his monastic robe, dressed in white, and expelled from the monastery; and this applies even to a Vajra Master in a Tantric monastery [*mantrivihāra*]. (SANDERSON 1994:92, with Sanskrit text in footnote 5)

Similarly, Atiśa was certainly responding to the fear of West Tibetan rulers that the Buddhist religion had been corrupted, since householders had become leading Tantric practitioners. We will come to the later proviso of Abhayākara Gupta (cf. below p.275), which may well refer to a situation exactly like that of Atiśa's mission, teaching in the wilds of Tibet where institutionalised Buddhism had lost its footing since the ninth century persecution by King Glang dar ma.

In Vajragarbha's verses one phrase which occurs twice is somewhat ambiguous. *Yogācāra* (vv.7b, 13a) could simply refer, as translated, to the practice of *yoga*, which is common as a term for just about every Indian religion. Alternatively it could be the specific name of the Mahāyāna Yogācāra philosophy of Mind Only (*cittamātra*), and so the verses would have different implications. The criticism of Vajragarbha would then be aimed at a strategy we will see enunciated again and again, namely that one may, for example, take the higher initiations as a monk, if only one correctly understands the nature of reality, in this case according to the Yogācāra truth that it is mind only. Hence verse 13ac could also be translated:

They disguise their own misdemeanours under the cloak of *yogācāra*, ['It's all *mind only*'].

Wisdom is Morality

Although this alternative interpretation of Vajragarbha may not be the preferred option here, crucially even Atiśa seems to have envisaged such a justification of otherwise unpalatable activities. Following his discussion of his verses which prohibit celibates from taking the higher initiations, he turns to verse 67ac, which apparently made the *ācāryābhiṣeka* sufficient qualification for higher Tantric practice. As we saw, there is no mention here of that qualification being sufficient for practice that brings enlightenment, and we should always remember that the whole section was prefaced with the restriction that he was only addressing the generation stage, or preliminary practice, not the advanced practice of the completion stage. Moreover, the final line before the closing verse of authorship has not been correctly translated in most discussions of the passage. We included it above with the rest of that verse:

One who has received the *ācāryābhiṣeka* may hear and explain
all the Tantras and perform *homa* ritual and so on. Provided one
has correct knowledge of reality there is no fault.

(*rgyud kun nyan dang 'chad pa dang*
sbyin sreg mchod sbyin sogs byed pa
slob dpon dbang bskur rnyed 'gyur zhing
de nyid rig la nyes pa med. v.67 BoPaPra 138)

SHERBURNE translates:

Having acquired the preceptor-initiation, he may listen to all
tantras and explain them; perform fire-offering, gift-worship and
the like: there is no wrong in wisdom about reality. (1983:177)

Cf. the very close translation of DAVIDSON:

Obtaining the master's consecration, the yogin may hear and
explain any of the esoteric scriptures, perform the offerings or
the fire ceremony; there will be no fault in his awareness of reality.
(1995:301)

EIMER has:

Wenn einer, der alle Tantras studiert und predigt, Feueropfer
[und] Opferdarbringungen und ähnliches vollzieht, die ‘Lehrer’-
Weihe erhält, so ist eben dies passend, und es liegt kein Fehler
darin. (1978:139)

Both authors seem to interpret the last line of the verse as conclusive justification that the preceding ruling that the teacher initiation is sufficient does indeed not contradict received wisdom and is not mistaken (although SHERBURNE’s translation is so obscure as to be perhaps saying nothing, and EIMER’s ‘passend’ is probably based on a confusion of *rig* with *rigs*). They may be correct about Atiśa’s intention, in which case he would have been feeling the need to defend his position against what would thus be the norm, that the preliminary initiation is not usually sufficient, because it does not initiate one into reality, as we have seen Abhayākara Gupta put it. In this way Atiśa would be claiming that somehow even the Teacher Initiation by itself can bring it about that:

There is no fault in [one’s] knowledge of reality.
(*de nyid rig la nyes pa med*)

However, it is more likely that the Tibetan represents a Sanskrit original with a locative absolute:

When there is knowledge about reality (*de nyid rig la*, **tattvajñāne*) then there is no fault (*nyes pa med*, **doṣo nāsti*).

Thus the last *pāda* overrides the preceding four verses with the ruling that, after all:

Provided he understands reality [even a celibate may perform the higher initiations, which will bring him a higher entitlement than that granted by the Teacher Initiation which is only really for preliminary Generation Stage practice and rather basic tantric ritual,] without [fear of incurring any] fault [as regards his vow of celibacy].

Again, I am grateful to Harunaga ISAACSON for initially pointing this interpretation out to me, for otherwise it has not been mentioned in previous discussions of Atiśa's much-discussed work. This could be the very position Vajragarbha's verses quoted above were criticising and is what we will see in many other authors.

Like the *pāda*, which is remarkably understated, the commentary similarly does not make it inevitable that the reader will come to our conclusion, although the possibility is always there. The ambiguity remains, and must be deliberate on the part of Atiśa, an author carefully responding to his patron's wishes while staying true to his understanding of his tradition. His autocommentary contains many quotes to the effect that if one acts motivated by compassion no harm is done, or, if one knows phenomenal reality to be an illusion then wrong too cannot exist. We will return to these justifications of tantric practice. Nevertheless, the ambiguity of the verse depends on the fact that these same quotations could, if only rather tenuously, be adduced as testimony that higher initiations are not needed, since: no harm would be done if they are avoided for the right reasons or if they are realised to be illusory and hence not necessary.

Otherwise, the problem for Atiśa remains that, to superficial appearance, banning the higher initiations explicitly only in the case of a celibate candidate leaves them available to a lay practitioner. If the non-celibate initiand alone can take these initiations, does that rank him higher than the celibate? We have already seen (above p.257) how Atiśa paraphrased his teacher to the effect that indeed lay initiands should also ideally not take them. But *Painḍapātika* gives no indication of what then is the mistaken basis for thinking the higher initiations to be necessary, as we saw taken for granted almost throughout in our above treatment of the first question. And we have now noted that Atiśa seems to go on to invert his teacher's perception, by revealing how and why it is in

fact not a problem for a celibate to practise the same sexual rites as a layman may with impunity.

Atiśa does not finally want to place the higher initiations out of reach of a celibate monastic candidate. He manages to sidestep that locally requested move at the very last moment, by the disingenuously throwaway insinuation that vows are inviolate as long as one has perfect insight. It is worth remembering, as Ronald DAVIDSON has noted (1995:293), that though this text is a cherished model, Tibetan monastics to this day do indeed take the higher initiations, albeit almost universally only in the visualised form which Atiśa does not once refer to as an option.

There are several exegetical manoeuvres performed by Tantric writers who wish to carry out a damage-limitation exercise with regard to the shocking prescriptions in their texts, when the audience is a monastic one. We will see some argue that it is not as a celibate monk that one is initiated, and often that the sexual intercourse is a metaphor to be experienced symbolically through visualisation. But one would assume that prior to the evasive tactics of either restricting eligibility or radical reinterpretation our authors would attempt literally to accept the teachings, if they could only explain how those prescribed ritual acts do not, in fact, present any threat to the ethical rectitude of Tantric Buddhist monastic life.

The Vajrāvalī

All of these tactics have a place in the writings of Abhayākara-gupta, one of the most authoritative of our authors, probably the latest and hence tending to supersede the rulings of his predecessors. In his *Vajrāvalī*, before teaching any of the *abhiṣekas* he describes who is eligible for them:

One should make fit to participate in the ritual [students] who have been well investigated [for signs of faith, and] who are free

of the faults of pride etc., who have been previously appointed, through learning (*śruta*), [thought (*cintā*) and mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*),] in the layman's, [novice's or monk's] pledges of discipline, who are devoted [to the Buddha, and] ready to undertake the Vajrasattva pledges, [and never mind if] they are of bad family, have no good qualities or are ugly.

(... *suparīkṣitān mānādidoṣarahitān upāsakādiśiṣāsu śrutādibhiḥ parikarmitān bhaktān vajrasattvasaṃvaragrahaṇayogyān kulagunarūparahitān apy adhivāsayet*. VajĀv 445)

The line turns out to be a paraphrase of a verse from the *Sārdhatriśatikā*, *The 450 Verses* or *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalavidhi* of Dīpaṃkarabhadra:

For the Lord said, and it is [also] in *The 450 Verses*:

‘One may make fit to participate in the ritual the ugly, and even those of low qualities and lowly [birth]. The ritual [for entry] in the maṇḍala is permitted for any (*api*) of the four communities [of lay men and women, monks and nuns], who are devoted to their points of discipline [and] delight in [the doctrines of] the Mahāyāna.’ (GuSaMaVi 536–537 (Tib.))

The last predicate is glossed as follows:

By saying ‘[they] delight in the Mahāyāna,’ [Dīpaṃkarabhadra] teaches that mental activity is the prime factor of that [Mahā]yāna, lest there should be thought to be any contradiction [between Mahāyāna doctrine and Vajrayāna ritual]. For the Lord proclaimed repeatedly that even in an action which is by nature reprehensible there [need be] no fault, thanks to a special commitment.

(... *tad uktaṃ² bhagavatā Sārdhatriśatikāyāṃ ca-virūpān nirguṇāṃś cāpi hīnān apy³ adhivāsayet*

² uktaṃ] corr.: ed. ukutaṃ

³ apy] corr.: ed. api

*caturṇām apy anujñātaḥ paśadām maṇḍale vidhiḥ
 śikṣāsu svāsu yuktānām mahāyānaratātmanām iti* (GuSaMaVi
 536–537)
*... mahāyānaratātmanām ity anena manaskarmaṇḍānatām asya
 yānasya darśayaty avirodhārtham. prakṛtisāvadye 'pi hi karmaṇi
 samutthānaviśeṣād anāpattir bhagavatā bahuśaḥ prakāśitā, vivṛtā
 cāsmābhir Āmnāyamañjaryādiṣu. VajĀv ibid.)*

And we are referred for further details to Abhayākara's commentary on the *Saṃputatantra*, the *Āmnāyamañjarī*, and elsewhere (e.g. his *Abhayapaddhati* on the *Buddhakapālatantra*).

Abhayākara Gupta clearly envisages that monastics be eligible for induction into Tantric Buddhism, and immediately backs up his potentially contentious opinion with argument. What he emphasises is the mental activity of the Mahāyāna, and that even conventionally immoral action may be harmless, provided one has the right mental attitude. Unfortunately, in this dissertation we will have to leave aside the interesting leads to his *Āmnāyamañjarī* and *Abhayapaddhati*, to passages which analyse the causality of using the defilements to eradicate the same. For on our present topic of monks and the higher initiations the *Vajrāvalī* continues:

Elsewhere too [we find]:

'There is no fault for one pure in mind, nor indeed for one compassionate because of love.'

And:

'Even the forbidden is permitted to the seer of the truth who is merciful.'

Moreover, when thanks to the accumulation of merit and great learning and so on one is resolutely convinced that all dharmas are nothing but emptiness, that they are like an illusion or a dream, where is there even a whiff of contradiction between the vows of a monk and of a *vajradhara*? That is why the Lord said: 'Let him make a monk a *vajradhara*.'

And this must necessarily be accepted.

(*anyatra ca— nāpattiḥ śubhacittasya snehāc caiva dayāvataḥ iti. ni-
śiddham apy anujñātaṁ kṛpālor arthadarśinaḥ iti ca. yaḥ punar
upacitapunyabāhuśrutyādibhiḥ sarvadharmān māyāsvapnasamān
śūnyataikarasān sudṛḍham adhimuñcati, tasya bhikṣuvajradhara-
samvarayoḥ kva virodhagandho 'pi. ata evoktaṁ bhagavatā:
bhikṣuṁ vajradharam kuryāt iti. avaśyañ caitad abhyupeyam.* VajĀv
ibid. ctd.)

Abhayākaragupta is alluding to a couple of earlier Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrines which lie at the core of Tantric Buddhism, namely: first, that a Bodhisattva— and the Vajrayāna is for Bodhisattvas just as the rest of the Mahāyāna is— must consider that no deed is too horrible or indeed forbidden for a compassionate being when the benefit of other beings is at stake; and secondly, that wisdom, a correct understanding of reality, means the transcendence of dualities so that activities such as what appears to be intercourse with a real woman are in fact virtual relationships between illusory non-substantial players, either, as here, because of the Mādhyamika truth of emptiness, or, as we find in Ratnākaraśānti's commentaries and will see in Vāgīśvarakīrti, because of the Yogācāra truth of mind only.

Thus he continues:

How otherwise could [the rule] taught in the Vinaya be justified? [There it says that] a monk is not at fault, seeing a dream [and] even experiencing up to and including the bliss of sexual union with a real woman [who also] sees a dream [at the same time and] who is experiencing the bliss of union with him, thanks to the simultaneous awakening of the latent impressions of both.

(*katham itarathā samakālam ubhayor vāsanāprabodhāt svapnaṁ
paśyan bhikṣur anubhavattatsaṃyogasukhāyām⁴ svapnaṁ paśya-
ntyām bāhyāṅganāyām dvīndriyasukhaparyantaṁ anubhavann a-
py anāpattika iti vinaye⁵ pratipāditaṁ samādhātavyam.*⁶ VajĀv

4 anubhavattatsaṃyoga-] MS: ed. anubhavatsaṃyoga-

5 vinaye] MS: ed. niyame

6 samādhātavyam] MS: ed. samādātavyam

ibid. ctd.)

We can only understand what Abhayākara is doing in this complicated sentence when we realise that the scenario depicted can be mapped point for point onto that of the third initiation, in which correct knowledge of reality would mean that the initiate can indeed see his consort and their intercourse as nothing more than a dream, i.e. empty or mind only. It is noteworthy that the woman is here ascribed the same insight.

The Vinaya passage he is concerned to find justification for is the episode in the *Suttavibhaṅga* where a certain monk of Bharukaccha had a dream he was making love to his one-time wife, and assumed he had thus excluded himself from the order by committing one of the disbarring offences. However, he was assured by the Vinaya expert Upāli that no offence had been committed since it was only a dream.

(*aññataro bhārukacchako bhikkhu supinantena purāṇadutiyaikāya methunam dhammam paṭisevitvā asamaṇo ahaṃ vibbhamissāmīti... āyasmā upāli evam āha— anāpatti āvuso supinantenā 'ti.* Vin. iii.39)

Through sleight of philosophical hand, and in an elegant analogy, Abhayākara's sentence legitimates a monk's sexual consecration while locating that legitimacy in the Vinaya itself.

The following exceptions first prohibit relations with an actual woman where there is a population antipathetic to Tantric Buddhism:

If, on the other hand, there is an area inhabited by bad people then even this [compassionate, wise and meritorious monk] should be given the secret and wisdom knowledge initiations using an imaginary (*jñāna*-) consort; but in the absence of bad people [the initiations] should be with a real (*karma*-) consort.

(*yadi punar durjanagocarah pradeśaḥ syāt, tadā tasyāpi jñānamudrayā guhyaprajñājñānābhīṣekau dātavyau; durjanāsaṃbhave tu karmamudrayā.* VajĀv *ibid.* ctd. 446)

This ruling describes a situation strikingly close to that which Atiśa was called to address when he went to Tibet, where the authorities did not approve of aspects of Tantric Buddhism. By this later regulation he would have been justified in forbidding a monk's taking of the higher initiations with a real live woman. But we should remember that Atiśa did not show any awareness of or interest in the distinction between a physical consort and a virtual (and hence virtuous) relationship. He may have suspected such a distinction, fearing it could not hold in the Buddhist context where action is first and last of all the mental action of intention.

Meanwhile Abhayākara goes on to stress that, even if society could tolerate a monk's physically enacted initiation, the physical enactment would be disastrous unless he had the correct insight:

But it is forbidden that a monk whose conviction about reality is not solid should receive the initiation[s] with an externally [physical] consort, even if he is full of faith. Otherwise there would be a big disaster because of the breaking of his earlier [monastic] vows.

(adṛḍhatattvādhimokṣasya tu bhikṣoḥ śrāddhasyāpi bāhyaprajñā-bhikṣekasya grahaṇam niṣiddham. anyathā pūrvasaṃvarabhramśān mahān anarthaḥ syāt. VajĀv ibid. ctd. 446)

Monastic vows endure, unless one understands their emptiness. Without that knowledge there are two further alternatives. Either the teacher can project a visualised form, or, if the monk had earlier lived a complete secular life, then those earlier sensual experiences can once more be brought to mind:

If, again, the teacher is steady in his meditation practice then that [monk without firm conviction] too should be given the wisdom initiation with a mental consort projected by [the teacher], and receiving ['her'] he should have no fear of losing his celibacy since there is no physical action. But if he has experienced [erotic] bliss when previously a householder he can be taught the stages of the blisses and so on by the memory thereof.

(*yadi punar guruḥ sthirabhāvano bhavati tadā tenārpitāyāṃ jñānamudrāyāṃ tasyāpi prajñābhīṣeko deyo grhṇataś ca nābrahmacaryāśaṅkāpi kāyakarmābhāvāt. tasya tu prāggṛhitve 'nubhūtasukhasya smaraṇenānandādibhedah pratipādayitavyaḥ. VajĀv ibid. ctd.*)

How are we to imagine the enactment of the first of these two options? The idea seems to be that when the guru is an expert meditator he should be able to visualise a fantasy woman and, moreover, project that figment of his consciousness into the student's own mind. This sounds like hypnosis. Unfortunately, Abhayākara's is the only reference to such practice I know, and he does not expand on how the transmission of an imaginary consort is to be carried out.

Following his argument that a candidate with correct insight will be blameless, safe in the knowledge that life is but a dream, the correlate is that one who does not have that empowering knowledge will only be without fault if his actions are themselves restricted to a dream-like state. If he does not physically break his celibacy he remains a good monk. If he were to have sexual intercourse with a real live woman he would be sunk only because of his own mental limitations in not understanding such relations to be as illusory as all of *saṃsāra*. But is this option for the intellectually underqualified a second best? Does it bestow a lesser entitlement, a longer route to enlightenment, or even a lower goal?

We have seen that there are other circumstances where a monk may be full of insight, such as in a society where antinomian practices are unwelcome, under which it is envisaged that the initiation should be purely virtual, with an imaginary consort, a *jñānamudrā* as opposed to a *karmamudrā*. In that case the option is not for a lower level of student, but simply a factor of the socio-political situation. But what is not clear in all these alternatives is how one is then to have the sensual sensations and experience the

exemplary bliss. Is masturbation the answer, the activity which in our texts does not speak its name?

Indeed, imaginary relations need not be inferior to real scandalous or treacherous intercourse, at least for a Mahāyāna Buddhist with insight. For such a practitioner should have no difficulty in experiencing the whole gamut of real sensations, even in a vacuum. But then our previous question is turned on its head and one is forced instead to wonder, once again, why ever insist on this whole performance? Abhayākara has demanded greater attainment of the initiand who is to have a real woman, so he clearly does not rate mental eroticism higher than the real thing.

The second alternative for a candidate of weaker understanding was that a formerly married initiand can simply be made to recollect his earlier sensual experience as a householder. We referred to this option above in the first question, when discussing the relationship of exemplary to actual goal (cf. above p.203), because, in harmony with that minimal description of the function of the initiation, it implies that the union is not a sacramental necessity, but can be a prosaic affair and performed outside a ritual context, without Buddhist significance. Nevertheless, Abhayākara gives this alternative within the section on 'a monk without firm conviction about reality,' so again this is not an ideal case.

Finally, we learn that there is an option regarding the initiating teacher also:

And when the teacher is a monk, all [I have] said applies equally to him for the giving of the secret initiation and the rest.

(*guror api sati bhikṣutve guhyābhiṣekādīdāne sarvaṃ uktam anu-sandheyam; VajĀv ibid. ctd.*).

If the teacher may be a monk, then we must infer that Abhayākara assumed that he might equally be a layman. If he is a monk his vows are not at risk, so long as he also has correct understanding.

But this final ruling, like the preceding details about the monastic candidate in particular, leave open the contrasting possibility that neither student nor teacher has anything to fear provided they are not monastics. Silence should not be recklessly interpreted as loaded, but it makes sense that as far as sexual intercourse itself is concerned, a layman is not acting out of character or immorally, until he is required to commit adultery, incest or other perversions of societal norms. It is another question whether a layman taking sexual initiations would not be engaging in antinomian activity. Nevertheless, a monk teacher has to break his vow of celibacy in the second, secret, initiation, which is specifically referred to in this line, and he must observe Abhayākara's prescriptions if he wishes to remain a monk as well as a Tantric teacher.

The Saṃkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi

The scriptural line cited by Abhayākara, 'Let him make a monk a vajradhara', is also found elsewhere, in the *Guhyasamāja* oriented *Saṃkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* of Vāgīśvarakīrti for example. That text begins with a list of its nine consecrations, and then there are two verses prescribing who, lest the religion be harmed, may not receive the seventh and eighth, that is to say our *guhya* and *prajñā-jñāna* initiations, namely:

non-Buddhists, idiots, dry logicians, *śrāvakas*, eunuchs, the aged, children, kings, sons and the faithless.

(*na tīrthyāya na mūrkhāya na śuṣkatarkaratāya*⁷ *ca*
*na śrāvakāya na ṣaṇḍhāya na vṛddhāyārbhakāya*⁸ *ca*
na rājñe 'pi na putrāya na śraddhārahitāya ca
saptāṣṭamau pradātavyau śāsane hitam icchatā. SaṃĀbhVi 410).

⁷ śuṣkatarkaratāya] corr.: ed. śuskatarkaratāya

⁸ arbhakāya] corr. metri causa: ed. arbhāya

Monks are noticeably not excluded, although *śrāvakas*, i.e. non-Mahāyānists, are.

It is not until Vāgīśvarakīrti comes to describe the final, fourth empowerment that the issue is raised again. The first thing to notice is that the preceding *prajñāñānābhīṣeka* has at any rate been given with a real woman (*sākṣāt*):

(*tad anu labdhasaptābhīṣekasya sākṣādgrhītaprajñāñānasya*⁹ *vā-caiva dadyād*¹⁰ *abhīṣekaratnaṃ gurūpadeśād boddhavyarūpaṃ*¹¹ *dadyāt*. SaṃĀbhVi *ibid.* 419).

The option of instead using a visualised consort was known, for giving the purely verbal fourth initiation to an initiand who has received such an insubstantial consort is expressly forbidden:

lest the *samaya* [of correct performance of the consecration rituals] should be broken.

(*sākṣādaprāptaprajñāñānābhīṣekasya*¹² *punar vacanamātrābhīṣeko na deyaḥ, samayaḥsatibhayāt*. SaṃĀbhVi *ibid.* 419).

Partly identical phrasing is found in Kuladatta's all-purpose *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*:

Now, in order to purify knowledge, the jewel of initiations will be told, the fruit which is the fourth initiation, to the [student] who has physically (*sākṣāt*) received the wisdom knowledge initiation [with a real woman], according to prescribed ritual. [It may] not [be given] to another [who has not received the third initiation with a real woman], lest the *samaya* [of correct performance of the consecration rituals] should be broken.

9 sākṣād-] MS: ed. sākṣāt-

10 dadyād] MS: ed. dadyāt //

11 boddhavya-] MS: ed. bodhavya

12 sākṣādaprāpta-] MS: ed. sākṣādprāpta

(*idānīm jñānaviśodhanārtham yathoktavidhinā sāṅśādgṛhītaprajñ-
ājñānābhīṣekasya*¹³ *caturthābhīṣekaphalabhūtam abhīṣekaratnam
vaktavyam, nānyasya samayaḥsatibhayāt.* KriSaṃPañ 514).

In Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Saṃkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi*, the objection is made that surely monks will never be able to get over that hurdle, because, it is here assumed, they would be ethically prevented from the enjoined performance of the third initiation *sāṅśāt*, with a real woman, and this lack of eligibility for monks is confirmed with a scriptural citation:

Surely, if the purely verbal [fourth] initiation is off limits [to those who have not taken the preceding initiation with a consort of flesh and blood], then how can monks be obliged, since they have no right to this [initiation]? For the [Lord] taught: 'Those who delight in their monkhood, men who delight in logical argument, and the aged, none of these should be taught reality.'

(*nanu yadi vacanamātrābhīṣekasya niśedhaḥ, katham*¹⁴ *tarhi bhikṣū-
nām anugrahaḥ kartavyaḥ, teṣāṃ atrādhikārābhāvāt? tathā coktam—*

*bhikṣubhāve ratā ye ca ye ca*¹⁵ *tarkaratā narāḥ*¹⁶
vṛddhabhāve sthitā ye ca teṣāṃ tattvaṃ na deśayet iti. SaṃĀbhVi
ctd. 419)

We will return to this verse, which is also quoted by Jagaddarpaṇa. For the moment we should note that Vāgīśvarakīrti has it in a form which has been modified to prove a couple of different points. In an older version it is unambiguously monks (*bhikṣubhāve sthitā*; cf. below p.297), as opposed to the far vaguer 'those who take pleasure in their monkly status' (*bhikṣubhāve ratā*), who

13 sāṅśād-] corr.: ed. sāṅśāg-

14 katham] corr.: ed. kathat

15 ye ca] MS: ed. omitted

16 tarkaratā narāḥ] corr.: ed. tarkaratāna[ra]ḥ, MS tarkaratānaḥ

are excluded from teachings of reality. The modified objection tempers that exclusion, so that Vāgīśvarakīrti can continue to argue for monks receiving the initiations, and that they may do so inasmuch as they do not inappropriately delight in their status, or are not already satisfied with that way of life, but are monks in a redefined sense.

First he immediately parries the objection with our line, now given in full and with its source, the *Mahāpratisarā*, the first *dhāraṇī* of the five which make up the popular *Pañcarakṣā* ritual text:

One should make a monk a vajradhara, intent on the correction of the wicked.

(*kathaṃ tarhy uktaṃ mahāpratisarādaḥ—
bhikṣuṃ vajradharaṃ kuryād duṣṭatarjanatatparam iti. SaṃĀbhVi
ibid. ctd. 419*)

Not any monk will do:

However, the monk of Śrāvakayāna view who is an extremely fierce ascetic has no entitlement to *mantra*, *mudrā* and the rest. And a [monk] of Śrāvaka vows who is intent on generating the thought of the Mahāyāna is entitled to *mantra*, *mudrā* and the rest, but not to the [higher initiations] beginning with the secret initiation. The monk who is entitled to all the empowerments and the rest is he of Śrāvaka vows who is intent on generating the thought of the Mantranaya.

(*kiṃ tu yo bhikṣur ekāntakaṭakatapasvī¹⁷ śrāvakayānadrṣṭis tasya
nāsty¹⁸ eva mantramudrādiṣv adhikārah. yas tu śrāvakaśaṃvaro
mahāyānacittotpādayuktas tasyāsti¹⁹ mantramudrādiṣv adhikārah,*

¹⁷ ekāntakaṭakatapasvī] conj.: MS ekāntakaṭāṅkatas tapasvī, ed. ekāntakata-
ṅkatam tapasvī, cf. Tib gcig tu nges par drag pa'i (N,P; ed. prefers grags pa'i
C,D) dka' thub can

¹⁸ nāsty] MS: ed. nāstv

¹⁹ tasyāsti] MS: ed. tasyāstu

*na punar guhyābhīṣekādau. yas tu śrāvakaśaṃvaro²⁰ mantranay-
acittotpādayuktas tasyāsti sarvatrābhīṣekādāv adhikārah SaṃĀbhVi
ctd. ibid. 419)*

Only a certain kind of Śrāvaka monk is excluded completely from Tantric practice, one who has not accepted the developed philosophies of the Mahāyāna, for his, our author appears to claim— somewhat tendentiously— remains an overly ascetic practice of sensory deprivation, adhering literally to the rules of the Vinaya. Even a monk who has taken Śrāvaka vows but does also follow Mahāyāna ideology is not eligible for the initiations but only for basic elements of Tantric Buddhism such as *mantra* and *mudrā*, features which are anyway already present in the Mahāyāna, where *mudrā* refers to a hand gesture, not a sexual consort. Finally, a monk who is committed to Śrāvaka vows will be eligible for even the higher initiations provided he has a Tantric understanding, or as Vāgīśvarakīrti puts it ‘is intent on generating the thought of the Mantranaya.’ Thus it is true both that a monk may not take the higher initiations and that he may, depending on his own perspective on the world.

The objection is raised:

But even then how could there not be breaking of the monastic vows? There is not. For [it is taught]: ‘I accept the exoteric and esoteric vows, [and] those pertaining to the third way, without contradicting the vow of a monk,’ and so on. Hence, the other vows are not contradicted and the [monk] is [merely] taking an extra one, so why then should there be a breaking of [his monastic] vows?

*(nanv evam api katham bhikṣusaṃvarakṣatir na syāt? na syāt.
tathā hi- bhikṣusaṃvarāpratiyogena saṃvaram pratigrhṇāmi bā-
hyaṃ guhyaṃ triyānikam ityādinā saṃvarāntarāvīruddham²¹ a-*

20 śrāvakaśaṃvaro] corr.: ed. śrāvaksamvaro

21 -antarāvīruddham] corr.: ed. and MS -antaraviruddham

dhikañ ca pratigrhṇāti, tadā katham samvarakṣatiḥ? SaṃĀbhVi
ibid. ctd. 419–420)

Again the objection is deflected by introducing a hierarchy of commitments, which are apparently made on different levels and so not mutually contradictory. But Vāgīśvarakīrti is well aware that this structure could be altogether too pat for some opponents, and so he asks himself again:

Very well, let there be the taking of an additional uncontradicted vow, but how can the monastic vows of someone engaging in the union of the two [sex] organs not be broken?

(atha bhavatu²² adhikāviruddhasamvaragrahaṇam, bhikṣusamvarasya tu dvayendriyasamāpattiṃ kurvataḥ katham na kṣatiḥ? SaṃĀbhVi *ibid.* ctd. 420)

The *Samkṣiptābhīṣekavidhi* anticipates the later *Vajrāvalī* in its solution, that women, like men, are not real, but objects of the imagination, as endorsed by the same analogy of the dream experience long scripturally legalised in the Vinaya. However, the argument is a protracted one, beginning with what looks like a flat denial of legitimacy with regard to relations with real women:

Even then there is no breach [of one's vows]. For the breach [of vows] is taught in the Vinaya and so on in [the context of] practising the forbidden, but not also in [the case] of practising what is not forbidden. In the Vinaya and elsewhere women are prohibited to those who enjoy passion marked by the enjoyment of a defiled embrace, with women lovely to men, gods, [*yakṣas*] and so on, who inhabit the triple world, [the universe,] but not those whose form transcends the triple world, who are nothing but an idea, [and] who are in the form of the consort of Mañjuvajra and so on. Otherwise, there would be a breach of [monastic]

22 bhavatu] MS: ed. rucav-

vows also in [the case of] women perceived in dreams, who are [similarly] objects of the imagination.

(*evam api na kṣatiḥ*.²³ *niṣiddhācaraṇe hi vinayādaḥ kṣatiḥ pratipāditā, na punar aniṣiddhācaraṇe 'pi. traidhātukavarttinarāmarādisundarīṣu*²⁴ *sāsravābhīṣvaṅgāsvādalaṅkāraṇaṃ rāgaṃ*²⁵ *āsvādayatām*²⁶ *tāḥ pratiṣiddhā*²⁷ *vinayādaḥ, na punas traidhātukākṛāntamūrtayo*²⁸ *vijñaptimātrarūpā mañjuvajrādisvābhārūpāḥ, anyathā svapnopalabdhasu kalpanāviśayasvarūpāsv api samvarakṣatiḥ syāt. Saṃ-AbhVi ibid. ctd.)*

We have seen that the Vinaya does permit a monk to have erotic experiences in his dreams, when he is not fully conscious and the woman is insubstantial. Vāgīśvarakīrti infers from that the same guilt-free status for initiation with a woman who is not of this world but a manifestation of the consort of a Buddha. Despite the opposite position we have already noted above (p.280), that he could not countenance that the watered-down performance of the ritual without a real woman would entitle one to hear teachings about reality, here he does not yet admit the identification of a consort who is 'nothing but an idea' with the women of phenomenal reality. Indeed, Vāgīśvarakīrti appears to be drawing a definite distinction between real women, of whichever of the three realms, with whom a monk may not enjoy relations, and the ideal and legitimate consort in the abstract.

The proviso is added that one must nevertheless not get carried away with a defiled feeling of pleasure, congratulating oneself:

Even with regard to those ladies [of consciousness only,] it would be a sin for one of defiled mind to rejoice:

- 23 kṣatiḥ] corr.: ed. kṣatiḥ
 24 -sundarīṣu] MS: ed. -sundharīsu
 25 -lakṣaṇaṃ rāgaṃ] corr.: MS and ed. -lakṣaṇarāgaṃ
 26 āsvādayatām] MS: ed. āsvādayatā
 27 pratiṣiddhā] corr.: ed. pratisiddhā
 28 -ākṛāntamūrtayo] MS: ed. -ākṛāntamūrttyā

‘Have I not done well! Am I not clever!’

Yes, it would be an offence, [but] just that, and not a breach of [monastic] vows. Even then, if one shows remorse that too would not be an offence. For the [Lord] said:

‘Crimes committed, [even] dreadful ones, become negligible when one shows remorse.’

(*atha tāsv api— sādhu mayā kṛtaṃ suṣṭhu mayā kṛtaṃ ity anumodamānasya kliṣṭacittasyāpattir bhavaty eva. satyaṃ bhavaty evāpattimātram, na punaḥ samvarakṣatiḥ. yadi tatrāpi vīgarhācittam karoti tadā tad apy āpattimātraṃ na syāt. tad uktam— kṛtāni pāpāni sudāruṇāni tanūbhavanti ātmavīgarhanena ity. SaṃĀbhVi ibid. ctd.*)

It is not clear in what the minor offence consists, whether it is simply post-coital continued enjoyment of erotic sensations, or indeed to feel pleased that one has got away with illicit intercourse, normally one of the four most grievous of all crimes a monastic may commit. At any rate, Vāgīśvarakīrti explains that such minor offences are easily expiated, if one is truly remorseful.

This may be contrasted with the moral of the Mahāyāna sūtra, the *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanā*, ‘The Dispelling of the Remorse of Ajātaśatru,’ that such consciousness should be seen as vain and so transformed into awakening. As Paul HARRISON and Jens-Uwe HARTMANN put it:

The notion of ‘emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) is applied unflinchingly to the problems of moral responsibility and personal continuity, in short, to the central Buddhist doctrine of karma, illustrated, as it were, with the ‘worst case scenario’ represented by the parricide Ajātaśatru, the archetypal villain being redeemed at last by the archetypal Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī. (2000:169)

The themes of that sūtra are very much those that are represented in one form or another by all of our authors when discussing this second question about whether monks may be eligible for (or get away with) sexual initiation, but it could not help to explain

why monks in particular or anyone in general should take those initiations in the first place.

Vāgīśvarakīrti too goes on to spell out that relations with a divine consort are not even an offence, let alone the breaking of monastic vows, without mentioning why such relations should be enjoyed. Instead, the objection we anticipated above is now raised:

It is all very well for this rule [of innocence to apply in the case of] a purely mind-made consort with the form of the consort of Mañjuvajra and so on, but how can it apply in the case of an external actual consort, [explicitly] forbidden in the Vinaya? [To which is responded:] Have you not heard, though it is well known, that *rūpa* and the other [*skandhas*] are all nothing but only the projection of one's mind?

(*nanu bhavatu cittamātraikarūpāyāṃ mañjuvajrādisvābhārūpāyāṃ*²⁹ *prajñāyāṃ ayaṃ nyāyaḥ, bāhyāyāṃ karmamudrāyāṃ vinayaniṣiddhāyāṃ*³⁰ *katham ayaṃ nyāyaḥ? kim iha bhavatā rūpādīnāṃ svacittapratibhāsamātraikaśarīratā prakīrtitā*³¹ *'pi na śrutā*?³² SaṃĀbhVi *ibid.* 420)

The objector has not understood that the earlier argument which appeared to legitimate ideal consorts while excluding mundane women was in fact an all-pervasive proof that no woman really exists, just as no practitioner does either, and so there is nothing to be ashamed of or punished for in non-existent relationships. He missed the hidden point of the argument because he did not have the benefit of Cittamātra teachings. Had he been previously introduced to that philosophy everything would be seen to be quite different:

29 -ādisvābhārūpāyāṃ] corr.: ed. -ādirūpāyāṃ

30 -niṣiddhāyāṃ] corr.: ed. -niṣedhāyāṃ. Tib. bkag pa ambivalent

31 -śarīratā prakīrtitā] em. with Tib. lus gcig pa nyid kyi grags pa: MS -śarīrapradhārttuyā, ed. corr. -śarīraprakīrtiyā, reports MS -śarīraphadhārttyā

32 śrutā] MS: ed. śruta

That is why it is said: If [you] admit this, [that you have not heard the truth about phenomena,] then for people like you there is no entitlement to Tantric Buddhism, which teaches that reality is mind-only or that everything is the mere appearance of false forms. Because of the understanding that all the categories of reality, *rūpa* [and the other *skandhas*], are nothing but a projection of one's own mind, there is no breaking of the vows for monks when they blamelessly take the initiation[s] with an [actual] *karmamudrā* who is pure because like an illusion, [and] who has been transformed into the consort of Mañjuvajra, for example, just like the appearance of a woman in a dream.

(*yenaivam ucyate, evam eveti cet, na tarhi bhavādṛśam*³³ *vijñāptimātrarūpatattvapratipādake alīkarūpapratibhāsamātratāpratipādake vā mantranaye adhikāro 'sti. rūpādisarvapaḍārthānām svacittapratibhāsamātratāpratipattya*³⁴ *svapnāṅganāpratibhāsābhinnamañjuvajrādisvābhārūpaparinatāyāṃ karmamudrāyāṃ māyopamatayā viśuddhāyāṃ niravadyābhiṣekalābhe bhikṣūṇāṃ samvatarabhraṃśo na*³⁵ *bhavati. SaṃĀbhVi ibid. 420–421)*

Vāgīśvarakīrti here condemns the opponent for his lack of understanding that reality only exists as a projection of one's own mind, which ignorance means he is not qualified for guilt-free initiation. Vāgīśvara has been teasing him rather, with arguments that could be taken to exclude real women from the ritual, but which are finally revealed to say the opposite. Unless one understands that phenomena are mind-only, one would be at fault in having sexual relations. The crime is in the mind, so if one thinks one is having real intercourse with a real woman one is guilty of that offence, even though one would in fact be mistaken about the reality of both the relationship and the woman.

Later Abhayākaragupta was to make correct insight a straightforward qualification for actual erotic experience, as we saw above.

33 *bhavādṛśam*] MS: ed. *bhavādṛśe*

34 *-mātratāpratipattya*] corr.: MS and ed. *-mātrapratipattya*

35 *na*] insert: with ed. (in different place), for sense, and following Tibetan

Otherwise, Vāgīśvara's position diverges slightly from that of Abhayākara, for his justification is a Cittamātra position as opposed to the later author's Śūnyatāvāda. The one major difference between them is that while Abhayākara was to propose a system of alternatives which allowed for the taking of the initiations with either real flesh and blood women or with visualised consorts, according to the circumstances and attainments of the monk involved, Vāgīśvarakīrti maintained that only the real thing would entitle a monk or other initiate to listen to teachings about reality, and he expressly condemned any substitution for that direct experience. Thus in answer to our main question, at one level both agreed that a monk is eligible for the higher initiations, although with various qualifications.

The Vajrācāryalakṣaṇavidhi

Vāgīśvarakīrti had defined such a monk as one who is committed to the Tantric way, in contradistinction to a regular Śrāvaka monk, or similarly a monk in the Mahāyāna mould. Different again is the way we find the reference of 'monk' being defined in the same two scriptural quotes cited by Vāgīśvarakīrti when incorporated in the *Vajrācāryalakṣaṇavidhi* of Jagaddarpaṇa, the first part of his *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*. This consists of a lengthy discussion on precisely our present question. It is a relatively late work which draws heavily on Abhayākara's *Vajrāvalī*.

Towards the end of the *Vajrācāryalakṣaṇavidhi* we learn that a monk too may be made a *vajradhara*, but that he must abandon robes and shaven head before he can receive even the preliminary initiations:

Just as the glorious Lord Śākyamuni, seeing the great benefit to living beings, in the form of a Wheel-Turning [Emperor] taught the practice of Tantric Buddhism, so too a monk should [take the form of a Wheel-Turning Emperor before] being made

a *vajradhara*. [Provided] he keeps his [monastic] discipline and his vows, [and] understands that all the constituents of reality are just like a dream, he must be made to abandon his saffron robe and put on a hair-piece, then consecrated with the initiations of garland, water and so on in due order [and everything else] up to the giving of the vows of consort and tantric teacher, prediction to future enlightenment, permission [to practice] and encouragement.

(*mahāntaṃ sattvārthaṃ paśyan yathā bhagavatā śrīśākyamuninā cakravartirūpeṇa mantranayacaryā pravartitā, tathā bhikṣor a-pi śīladharasya cīrṇavratinaḥ sarvadharmamāyopamādhigatasya*³⁶ *kāśāyaparityāgacūḍākaraṇādikaṃ kārayitvā yathāparipatya*³⁷ *mālodakābhīṣekādīnābhīṣiṇcya vidyāvajrācāryavratavyākaraṇānujñāśvāsaṃ*³⁸ *yāvad datvā vajradharaḥ kartavyaḥ*. VajLaVi 76)

A monk may take the initiation, but he has first to transform his appearance into that of an ideal monarch, dispensing with monastic robes, and no longer displaying a shaven head. Our higher *guhya* and *prajñājñānābhīṣekas* are not specifically mentioned here, but the next line makes it clear that they are included. For the objection is raised:

But will this [monastic candidate for the higher initiations] not be breaking his previous [monastic] vows? No, because the teachings form a [progressive] series. It is just as when a layman becomes a novice, and a novice a monk, [and the preceding vows are simply subsumed in the following stage;] do the layman's and [novice's] vows cease when one is monk? Moreover, if that were not so then the [following] statement of the Lord would make no sense:

'I gave up my passion-free form before reconstructing myself as a Wheel-Turning [Emperor] endowed with all the [dramatic] sentiments, great eroticism and so on, [only then] to teach the

36 -dharmamāyopamā-] corr.: ed. -dharmamayopamā-

37 yathāparipatya] em.: ed. yathā paripādyā

38 vidyāvajrācāryavrata-] corr.: ed. vidyāvajracaryāvrata

practice of Tantric Buddhism in order to use passion to destroy passion.’

(*tat kiṃ pūrvasaṃvarabhraṃśo na bhaved asya? na, uttarottaraśikṣa-
nāt. yathā upāsakaḥ śrāmaṇeraḥ kriyate śrāmaṇero bhikṣuś ceti,
tasya kiṃ bhikṣubhāve sati upāsakādisaṃvarābhāvo bhavet. ato
yady evaṃ na syāt, tarhi— vītarāgarūpam apahāya paramaśṛṅgā-
rādirasasamanvāgataṃ cakravarttirūpam abhinirmāya rāgeṇaiva
rāgaprahāṇārthaṃ mayā mantranayacaryā deśitā³⁹ iti bhagavato
vacanam asaṃgataṃ syāt. VajLaVi ibid. ctd. 78)*

In the first place there is no contradiction between the higher initiations and the monastic vows which they would require a practitioner to transgress. That is because of the principle by which later vows subsume earlier ones, defusing the potential conflict. The citation of the Buddha’s words emphasise that it is the ‘form’ or superficial appearance of a modest restrained way of being which he put aside before taking up his glorious role as Emperor, imbued with every passion. These lessons should be learned and the distinction between two possible identities maintained clearly:

Therefore one must not, as a monk, take up *vajra* and bell. And thus because this Tantric Buddhist practice is the practice of the highest great passion, and the passion-free practice is for a monk, [the former] is not appropriate for one in this [latter] form [as a monk]. Indeed, the Lord said in the *Sarvatathāgatapratīṣṭhā-mahāyogatantra*, amongst other things:

‘And when the *vajradhara* is a monk, he can be made a *vajradhara*, [only] after he has [acquired, usually as a wig, an] eight finger-breadths [length] of hair, and been dressed and adorned [in the manner of the archetypal royal deity]. For others [who are not monastic] there is no [such] regulation.’

(*ato bhikṣurūpeṇa vajraghaṇṭād dhāraṇam ayuktam. yataḥ paramamahārāgacaryeyaṃ bhikṣurūpatā ca vītarāgacaryety ayukteyam*

39 mantranayacaryā deśitā] corr.: ed. mantranayacaryādeśitā

*anenākāreṇa mantranayacaryā. ata evoktaṃ bhagavatā sarvatathā-
gatapratiṣṭhāmahāyogatantrē-
aṣṭāṅgulādikeśaṇ ca vastrābharaṇamaṇḍitaṃ
kṛtvā vajradharaḥ kārya bhikṣau vajradhare sati
anyeṣāṃ niyamo nāstītyādi. VajLaVi ibid. ctd. 78)*

Again, one must change one's outward appearance and get in costume in order to understand, psychologically, the difference between the two stages. A monk is not at all the only type of candidate envisaged. A lay initiate seems indeed to be the natural candidate, for whom no props such as wig or costume are needed to get into the spirit of the religion.

Meanwhile Jagaddarpaṇa reiterates again that one should not mix one's identities:

Therefore, those who do Tantric Buddhist practice as monks protect well neither the practice of Śrāvakas and so on, nor that of the Mantranaya.

*(tasmād ye tāvad bhikṣurūpeṇa mantranayacaryāpravṛttā bhavanti
na taiḥ śrāvakādicaryā surakṣitā⁴⁰ na ca mantranayacaryā⁴¹ iti.
VajLaVi 78)*

Near the beginning of his text, after simple *nirukti*s of the term *vajrācārya*, a Tantric teacher is said to be of three types: monk, novice and householder, following the scriptural *Samvarā-rṇavatantra*. Not only is the highest of these the monk, but:

If such is available then other-mantrins, [that is to say non-monastic *tāntrikas*,] should not be venerated. For if all three are found together and the householder is worshipped then the three jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Saṃgha are cheapened.

*(ācāryas trividhas tantrē yathoktaṃ samvarārṇave
grhasthaḥ śrāmaṇerākhyo bhikṣuś ceti tridhā bhavet*

40 -ādicaryā surakṣitā] insert space: ed. -ādicaryāsurakṣitā

41 -nayacaryā] corr.: ed. -nayacaryāḥ

*uttamo bhikṣur ācāryo yasmād uktam tathāgataiḥ
madhyamaḥ śrāmaṇerākhyo grhasthas tu adhamo mataḥ...
uttame vidyamāne tu nārādhyā anyamantriṇaḥ
satsu triṣv ekadeśeṣu grhasthaḥ pūjyate yadā
tadā buddhaś ca dharmaś ca saṃgho gacchaty agauravam iti. Vaj-
LaVi 72)*

The tension between Tantric monks and householders must reflect a time when tantric practitioners were found both in and outside monasteries, and the Saṃgha was compelled to reassert its primacy, as we shall consider further in our third question. Yet what Jagaddarpaṇa goes on to do here is to redefine the referents of the term *bhikṣu*, and before that *brahmacarya*, usually referring to celibacy:

It is well-known that the gloriously ‘pure of conduct’ (*-brahmacārin*), when in union with a young [woman,] does not give the gift which comes with pleasure, [i.e. ejaculation]. Consumer of the king of poisons, [*rāga*,] he knows what poison really is, and never does not consume.

*(śrībrahmacārī yuvatiprasaṃge⁴²
tyāgī na dānasya sukhāgatasya
viṣendrabhoktā viṣatattvavādi
na cāpy abhoktā bhavati prasiddhaḥ. VajLaVi 74)*

The redefinition of *brahmacarya*, signalled by the prefix *śrī-* (glorious), was set up by the preceding scriptural citation of a verse from the *Paramārthasevā*:

A good monk is ten times superior to a novice, and a good *mantrin* is ten times superior to a monk, because of [his] ‘glorious pure conduct,’ meditative attainment, loving kindness and so on, [and] his ascertainment of the truth.

*(uktam paramārthasevāyām—
śramaṇāt daśādbhikyaguṇaḥ subhikṣuḥ*

42 -prasaṃge] corr.: ed. -prasaṃgaḥ, MS -prasaṃga

*bhikṣor daśādhikyagūṇaḥ sumantrī
śrībrahmacāryeṇa samādhinā ca
maitryādinā tattvasuniścayena. VajLaVi 72)*

Just as there the punchline is that ‘glorious pure conduct’ is something beyond the range of a monk, Jagaddarpaṇa can relocate true restraint in the mental and physiological control which is the retention of semen.

Hence, because by the union of wisdom and means, [female and male,] and the series of blisses [identified] according to the instructions of the teacher, he destroys passion and the other *kleśas*, this [conservator of his semen] is the true monk.

*(yataḥ prajñopāyayogena gurūpadeśata ānandādikrameṇa ca rāgā-
dikleśabhedanād ayaṁ paramārthabhikṣuḥ. VajLaVi 74)*

That is why already in the Mahāyāna there are listed the following five varieties of monk: the monk in name [only], the monk who lives by begging, the monk inasmuch as he wears [clothes made up of] rags, the monk who is ordained by the four motions, and the monk whose *kleśas* are destroyed.

*(ata eva mahāyāne pañcavidho bhikṣuḥ paṭhyate: saṃjñābhikṣuḥ
bhikṣaṇaśīlo bhikṣuḥ bhinnapaṭadhāritvād bhikṣuḥ jñapticaṭu-
ṭayopasampādito bhikṣuḥ bhinnakleśo bhikṣuś ceti. VajLaVi ibid.
ctd. 77)*

This pentad can be traced back to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (ad AbhDhK 4.39), where Vasubandhu is countering the argument of the Kashmiri Vaibhāṣikas that it is possible to lose a part without losing the whole of one’s monastic discipline (de la VALLÉE POUSSIN 1988:614–615). Their error was to have taken into account only Vasubandhu’s fifth kind of monk, the regularly ordained one (*jñapticatūrtthopasampanna* ibid.). They had overlooked four alternative referents of the term ‘monk’: the one in name only, who is not ordained; the self-styled monk (*pratijñābhikṣu*), immoral and dissolute; the mendicant; and he who has

cut off his defilements, i.e. an arhat (*ibid.* cf. fn. 168 (incorrectly numbered 169 in main text) for *Mahāvīyutpatti* refs. 270.37–40 + 270.41 respectively).

Such redefinition of preexistent terms, above all in order to describe an achieved rather than an ascribed status, is at least as old as Buddhism. Now we can at last understand what, according to Jagaddarpaṇa, the Lord really meant when he said:

He should make a monk a Vajradhara.

(*ata evoktaṃ bhagavatā—
bhikṣuṃ vajradharaṃ kuryāt duṣṭatarjanatatparam iti.*
VajLaVi *ibid.* ctd. 77)

It is only the ‘monk’ in the sense of:

‘one who has destroyed the *kleśas*’, who is up to the job of correcting the wicked, no other. And the conventional, ordained monks, followers of the *Sūtra* based (*sautrāntika*) practice of the Śrāvaka[yāna], have no entitlement to this [Tantric Buddhism]. Why not? Because their [continued] faith in the Lesser [Way] makes them unsuitable.

(*bhinnakleśa eva param duṣṭatarjanakṣamo bhavati nānyaḥ. ye tu jñāpticatustayopasampādītā bhikṣavas te śrāvakasautrāntikacaryā-cārīṇaḥ teṣāṃ atrādhikāra eva nāsti. kutaḥ? hīnādhimuktikatvād abhavyās te*⁴³. VajLaVi *ibid.* ctd. 74)

Jagaddarpaṇa has redefined ‘monk,’ glossing it twice as ‘he who has taken the highest initiation,’ in the first case with the added emphasis that such a practitioner is worth ten [conventional] monks

(*yasmād agrābhiṣekalabdhas tasmād daśabhikṣusamaḥ*; VajLaVi *ibid.* 72; *tasmān mahāyāne ’grābhiṣekalabdho bhikṣur abhidhīyate*;⁴⁴ *ibid.* 74).

43 abhavyās te] corr.: ed. abhavyāsti

44 abhidhīyate] corr.: ed. abhidīyate

He insists that the regular monk should not be initiated. The monk's exclusion is not for his own sake, because his monastic discipline would be threatened by the ritual, but rather because he is automatically disqualified by his elementary affiliation.

Next he quotes *Sūtakamelāpaka* (more commonly referred to as simply *Sūta*, or *Caryāmelāpaka*) teachings— from the text which is perhaps the most important apologetic treatise regrettably not treated in this dissertation— to the effect that:

Because Śrāvakas and the rest do not understand that pleasure
can be a method

and hence are doing all the wrong,

difficult things, like the twelve [ascetic] *dhūtaguṇas*, with the long-term aim of liberation, they will get nowhere, because they do not understand the *niṣpannakrama*, [the final 'completion' stage of Tantric practice].

(ata evoktaṃ sūtakamelāpake⁴⁵... yataḥ śrāvakādayo... sukhopāyam anadhigamyā dvādaśadhūtaguṇādidiṣkaracaryābhiś cīrakāleṇa bodhim⁴⁶ anveṣyanti, tathāpi na prāpnuvanti niṣpannakramānadhigamarahitavāt. VajLaVi *ibid.* 74)

Already in the Pāli canon, the historical Buddha is portrayed condemning the ascetic extreme of the distracting two to be avoided, the other being hedonism. His Middle Way was designed to be the mean of such pointless and unhealthy practices. He himself practised harsh austerities in vain before finding his own enlightenment, austerities such as were taught by the Jinas amongst others. Four of the optional *dhūtaguṇas* or *dhūtaṅgas* are included in the five practices (with the addition of vegetarianism) insisted on as compulsory by a fundamentalist monk, thus bringing about the first schism (Vin ii.197, cf. GOMBRICH

45 sūtakamelāpake] corr.: ed. sūtrakamelāpake-

46 bodhim] corr.: ed. boodhim

1988:94–95). The Buddha did allow asceticism of this sort but importantly warned against vainglorious advertisement of one's self-mortification (GOMBRICH *ibid.*).

Here Jagaddarpaṇa alludes to the *dhūtaguṇas* as part of the deluded ascetic practice of Śrāvakas. It is in terms of this wrong kind of monk, the old-fashioned sort, that the Tantric Buddha was talking in the verse quoted next, which we have already seen cited by Vāgīśvarakīrti (cf. above p.281), denying monks the revelation of the truth. Except now it is in its stronger, original version, with the explicit 'those who are monks' (*bhikṣubhāve sthitā ye ca*; VajLaVi *ibid.* ctd. 76) instead of the subtler 'those who delight in their monastic status.'

Further anti-ascetic verses are quoted as scriptural support for Jagaddarpaṇa's anti-monasticism. A citation from later in the *Sū-takamelāpaka* warns:

[One's] wretched body becomes dessicated by dreadful harsh asceticism. Suffering distracts the mind. [And] where there is distraction there is no success.

(*Paramādyamahāyogatantra ca-
duṣkarair nīyamaḥ tīvrair mūrtiḥ śuśyati duḥkhitā
duḥkhād vikṣipyate cittaṃ vikṣepāt siddhir anyathā.* VajLaVi *ibid.*
ctd. 76)

A verse from the post-*Melāpaka* *Paramārthasevā* defines the true, 'glorious' (*śrī-*), teacher as not wearing red robes, not carrying jangling begging-staff and bowl, not covered with horrible dust, and not living at the root of a tree.

(*Paramārthasevāyām api-
na śrīgurur raktapaṭāṇvṛtāṅgo
na śrīguruh khikkhiripātradhārī
na śrīgurur duḥkhadapāṃśukūlī
na śrīguruh pādapamūlavāsī ityādivistaraḥ.* VajLaVi *ibid.* ctd. 76)

Jagaddarpaṇa can find support for his anti-ascetic position even outside Buddhism:

For elsewhere [in non-Buddhist traditions] also it is said:
‘The renunciate has no entitlement to initiation.’

(*anyatrāpy uktam— nāsti saṃnyāsino dīkṣāyām adhikāra iti*; VajLaVi *ibid.* ctd. 76),

where both *saṃnyāsin* and *dīkṣā* are clearly not Buddhist terms. Indeed, in Śaivism, of the four *āśramas* only *brahmacārins*— even if they are *naiṣṭhika*, lifelong celibates— and married householders may operate as *ācāryas*, while *vanaprasthas* and *saṃnyāsins* are excluded (Alexis SANDERSON, personal communication). Likewise, one is not permitted to touch a *liṅga* which has been installed by a Pāśupata or Lākula, both of whom would be renunciates, outside of society (*ibid.*).

So is it the case,

our text asks,

that a monk is never entitled [to a Tantric persona]? It is. [At least,] not in this form [of ascetic monk].

(*tat kiṃ sarvathaiva nāsti bhikṣor adhikārah? nāsty anenākāreṇa*.⁴⁷ VajLaVi *ibid.* ctd. 76)

But it is presumably a different story for our redefined *kleśa*-free monk. Nevertheless, one would not expect the monks living in the monasteries of this period, as earlier, to have been ascetics, though they were of course renunciates. It is as though the Tantric Buddhists are arguing that denying oneself the experience of (erotic) bliss, as precursor of and means to attain the great bliss of enlightenment, is akin to starving oneself of food, when one should

⁴⁷ anenākāreṇa] MS: ed. anenākāranena

strive to be comfortable in order not to be distracted unnecessarily by suffering.

If that is not what they are doing in criticising so-called asceticism, then Jagaddarpaṇa's polemic would appear to be directed against, not monasticism *per se*, but an extremely strict sub-set thereof. Similarly, we have seen that following Vāgīśvarakīrti's citation of the critical *Pañcarakṣā* line: 'Let him make a monk a Vajradhara,' he added: 'However, the monk of Śrāvakayāna philosophy who is an extremely fierce ascetic has no entitlement to mantra, mudrā and the rest' (cf. above p.282). Thus both these authors, whatever their respective strategy for entitling a monk to higher and sensual Tantric consecrations, are incidentally combatting a contemporary tendency to the other extreme, of excessive sensory-deprivation. So how shall we now answer our final question?

*Is Tantric Buddhism for Monks?**A Moot Point*

This question will have a variety of answers, according to context. In the first place, it depends what one means by 'Tantric Buddhism'. We have seen that our defined 'Higher Tantric Buddhism' commentators— all monastic— do, on the whole, require a practitioner to undergo sexual initiation in order to be qualified for the path to enlightenment that tradition prescribes. Next, the majority of authors agreed that a monk is eligible for sexual initiation, albeit that eligibility is restricted according to the candidate's understanding of reality, his attitude to monastic status, the tangibility of the consort and physicality of the intercourse, as well as the socio-political situation in one's environment. Thus we may answer the question: Yes, provisionally. However, all the above conditions are variables. Different authors did hold different positions. There is no unanimous consensus. Thus our question may also be answered: No, not necessarily.

The manuals analysed in the first two questions above were all composed by monastic authors, which provides a further restricting parameter to our results. Moreover, the evidence is clustered within a relatively limited period of time, namely from the late tenth to early twelfth century. Although we have noted certain developments or changes in the positions of our sources in the course of those two centuries, this has been a somewhat synchronic approach, examining the situation at a particular point of time.

If one broadens the chronological focus, to attempt instead a more diachronic study of the historical development of Tantric Buddhism over many centuries, then the contrasts and obscurities become much more obvious. We are back to the old question: Where did it all begin? Was Tantric Buddhism initially designed

for, let alone by, monks?

If sexual initiation, or less specifically sexual *yoga* as a regular practice, was one of the original components of Tantric Buddhism— directed towards enlightenment— then it seems unlikely that a celibate monk would have been the first candidate to come to mind. In the eleventh century, monastic commentators struggled to incorporate such erotic relations into the purview of regulated monastic life; they were adopting and adapting an innovation from outside their tradition. But they were notably successful in their project. In the end, success was so complete that some Tantric monks appropriated the originally alien tradition to the demanded exclusion of their non-monastic colleagues.

Together with those physical enactments of the dissolution of duality, came other methods for the inversion of accepted norms, in order to realise their relativity and ultimate emptiness. The larger [sub-]title of the present dissertation is ‘Antinomianism as a Norm’. The normalisation of strong antinomianism obtains at two levels: in the arena of general normal ideology and behaviour; and, further, in the institutionalisation within strictly controlled monastic life of its own theoretical antithesis. What now can we conclude from our study?

Conclusion

Tantric Buddhist Apologetics

We have been assessing Tantric Buddhist apologetics in terms of the reasoned defence that scripture and named authors made of their religion. I proposed that because of the ‘away’ (Gr. *apo-*) prefix, the genre might be initially other-directed (Gr. *apologeomai* speak in defence). However, such literature is in practice more an explanation to insiders (or prospective insiders) of how their tradition functions.

Another way to etymologise apologetics would be to describe it as the ‘explaining away’ of anomalous features, especially anomies (‘lack of the usual social or ethical standards in an individual or group’; OED s.v.). Thus the reference of apologetics can include the sense of an apology, which we know the tradition and its commentators, ancient and modern, eventually offered. Their apologetic claim is that apparently inappropriate prescriptions have been misunderstood. Rituals entailing physical relations, for example, should not be performed as such, but should be interpreted as metaphors for a psychological transformation. They are no more than a way of representing higher phenomena in the language of earthly experience. The use of such language in the Western tradition is famous, from the Song of Songs— in the Old Testament but the heir of Babylonian love poetry— through to the detailed description of all phases of love-making in the works of St Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth century (PENNINGTON 1997).

In the Introduction we considered how already in the early Buddhist Canon, Śākyamuni converted Nanda to monasticism by promising him the loftiest of erotic delights. His pledge was not to be taken literally, a distinction Nanda, once ordained, had to be shamed into comprehending. Yet in that narrative, as well as in many *suttas*, the Buddha did compare the pleasure of advanced meditational attainments, including enlightenment, to

sensual pleasures of the world.

But that is not the same thing as recommending sensual pleasure as a means to that end, which is what the texts of Tantric Buddhism insist. Nevertheless, even for those later authors, it was a point of debate whether the goal could be described as the potentially unsatisfactory bliss. We found laid out in the *Abhiṣekanirukti* the argument that the way to the goal must be like the goal in certain respects, and hence that means can no more be blissful than the end can be. Moreover, Abhayākara Gupta introduced the possibility of a mental substitution for actual erotic experience, although that was for him an ersatz or inferior option (given particular prevailing limitations); nor was this option found in most other authorities.

In Part I, I prepared the reader for the detailed apologetic explanation of the *abhiṣekas* in Part II, by analysing the claims of Tantric Buddhist literature to membership of the broader Buddhist fold. That membership is articulated in accounts which have the historical Buddha undergo a Tantric path to enlightenment, and narrative settings which adapt the canonical settings of the *sūtras*. Both strategies are as effective at undermining the older traditions as they are at appropriating their legitimisation. Just as the earlier development of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva ideal and the contemporaneous new ontologies had been juxtaposed with the deficient view and *arahant* ideal of Śrāvakayāna Buddhism, so Tantric Buddhism too saw itself as something quite other than the Śrāvakayāna. While its proponents allied themselves with the Mahāyāna side of the divide, they also in turn contrasted their methods with what they perceived as the deficiencies of that Perfection Way, deliberately relegating that discipline to an inferior place in the now upwardly extended hierarchy.

Despite such conscious self-differentiation by Tantric commentators, when it comes to the sexual initiations, a large propor-

tion of their justifying apologetic is founded upon inherited principles, whether originating in the immediately preceding Mahāyāna ideology, or indeed with the teachings of the historical Buddha himself. The mootness of the final question of Part II reflects the circular motivation of this apologetic. It is as monks, albeit simultaneously as Bodhisattvas, that the authors I have studied formulate their justification. It is on account of their multiple levels of Buddhist allegiance that their apologetic reveals this tendency to traditional argumentation.

But such a revelation says nothing about the original function of the practices these authors felt compelled to justify. One can say that within the reference of Tantric Buddhism two different ideologies obtain: the Tantric and the Buddhist. The substance of this thesis, as defined in the title, has been the examination of the Buddhist of these two. Yet our subtitle points rather towards the Tantric manner of thought and action.

Both headings refer simultaneously to the other: apologetics to the defence of Tantric antinomianism in particular; and antinomianism as a norm to the normalisation of that ‘visionary speculation’ (OED s.v. *ideology*, meaning 3) within the institution of Buddhism. Apologetics is indeed the argument for what is Buddhist in the evidently changed tradition, but it also implies the justification— or even explaining away— of peculiar activities for which one is pressed to apologise. The requirement of antinomianism— ‘as a norm’— refers here both to the paradoxical principle characteristic of Tantrism as such, and to that principle’s further normalisation within the Buddhist fold, which has its own characteristic systems of rules (to be broken).

Antinomianism as a Norm

Antinomianism does not, however, translate an indigenous Indian term, but is borrowed from the history of Western Christian-

ity. The term 'antinomian' is said to have been coined by Martin Luther to describe the view of his fellow Protestant and German, Johannes Agricola, 'that Christians are released from the obligation of observing the moral law' (c.1531, OED s.v.). The Catholic Encyclopedia explains that

Agricola and his secretaries..., pushing a mistaken and perverted interpretation of the Reformer's doctrine of justification by faith alone to a far-reaching but logical conclusion, asserted that, as good works do not promote salvation, so neither do evil works hinder it; and, as all Christians are necessarily sanctified by their very vocation and profession, so as justified Christians, they are incapable of losing their spiritual holiness, justification, and final salvation by any act of disobedience to, or even by any direct violation of the law of God. (HERBERMANN 1907:s.v.)

As early as the second century AD, Gnostics such as Marcion and his followers ('perhaps the most dangerous foe Christianity has ever known'; *ibid.*: s.v. Marcionites) had already seen an opposition between the Gospels and the Pentateuch of Moses: God's love rather than the Jewish law. In the sixteenth century, Luther attacked Agricola for his teaching that:

Only the unregenerate were under the obligation of the law, whereas regenerate Christians were entirely absolved and altogether free from any such obligation. (*ibid.*: s.v. Antinomianism)

During the reign of King Charles I, the English Parliament passed 'severe enactments' against the Antinomians (1648; *ibid.*). Shortly before that the Puritan Mrs Anne Hutchinson had been formally condemned in Boston, Massachusetts, for claiming that since the Fall man is, in fact, powerless to act to earn merit, because he is totally under the law of grace, and therefore not bound by moral law (1636; *ibid.*).

Although the Catholic Encyclopedia reports the anathematization of such heretical doctrine at the Council of Trent, the entry repeats several times that we are dealing with:

a theoretical and not a practical Antinomianism.... [I]t is highly doubtful if it has ever been directly put forward as an excuse for licentiousness; although, as can easily be seen, it offers the gravest possible incentive to, and even justification of, both public and private immorality in its worst and most insidious form. (*ibid.*)

So the European origins of the term we have adopted to describe Tantric Buddhism do not make a very good match. Christian antinomianism was apparently a theoretical doctrine, a form of passivity, while the way in which Tantric Buddhists carefully worked out the permutations of their practice speaks for active implementation. Again, Christian antinomianism was able to remain theoretical because it was only the weak form: the elect are free to break the laws of man and God, but they are under no compulsion to do so. In contrast, Tantric Buddhist authors did everything they could to justify and maintain the necessity of their controversial system: without it one could not advance very far on the path, or at any great speed. It is not as though the Christian elect felt compelled to demonstrate their redemption abroad, by flouting convention with impunity, sure of their place in heaven. Nor did the Antinomians of the Reformation argue for the abolition of mundane conventions as deluded restrictions on the full glory of man, while non-Christians, for example, were not yet redeemed by God's grace.

There were, however, older Christian heresies, Gnostic sects who are said to have gone very far down this libertine road. The difficulty with assessing such reports, as Robert LERNER repeats (1972), is that they are found in hostile sources, the kind of source which might earlier have accused the first Christians of carrying out human sacrifice to provide the blood and body for the Eucharist, or Jews of murdering Christian children in medieval England. Our case is different again, for the sources for Tantric Buddhist antinomianism are its own apologisers. They offer as the rationale for such activity that it is the indispensable method

to realise one's own enlightenment, for example enacting one's identity as a Buddha in union with his consort, at the same time thereby experiencing the dissolution of deluded duality.

Expressing both these ideas, autotheism and antinomianism, Meister Eckhart wrote in the fourteenth century:

I am converted into Him, not as a similar being but so that He makes me one with Himself..

and:

If a man is rightly disposed he should not regret having committed a thousand mortal sins. (cited LERNER 1972:2)

He was charged with heresy at the end of his life and posthumously condemned by Pope John XXII (*ibid.*:184). However, Robert LERNER, in his sober analysis of the heresy of the 'Free Spirit', comments that:

Expressed properly the belief that the human soul can in some way become united with God is not heretical but is the basis of orthodox mysticism. (*ibid.*:16)

It is

whether this is arrived at by God's grace or by nature (*ibid.* ctd.)

which is the crucial distinction.

In Tantric Buddhism, unlike the Tantric Śaivism which some would identify as its progenitor, there is of course no God to bestow grace, nor, ultimately, any souls upon which to bestow it. There is a world of difference between becoming 'a' Śiva in heaven, or attaining a state in which one can see God

as one and the same and wholly everywhere (the pantheism of Gregory the Great, cited LERNER:1972:16),

and the Tantric Buddhist awakening to the nondifferentiation of the ultimate reality, in this respect both atheistic and truly autotheistic.

Another distinction between orthodox and heretical mysticism is the question of its relationship to the ministry of the Church (*ibid.*:17).

In the later thirteenth century, anticipating the Protestant Reformation, it was

here that the heretics of the [Swabian] Ries became really extreme. For them identification between God and the soul was so immediate and complete that there was no need for any mediation on the part of the clergy or any need to seek counsel from learned men. (*ibid.*:17)

They

rejected prayers, fasting, and confession as useless and unnecessary for the deified (*ibid.*),

which comes close to the anti-ascetic rhetoric we saw in Tantric authors, albeit prefigured in the historical Buddha's own rejection of meaningless ritual and counter-productive self-abnegation. Nevertheless, it is certainly not the case that Tantric Buddhists denied the need for mediation; for them the teacher was pre-eminent as the transmitter of Buddha qualities or the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), literally so in the student's consumption of his semen (*bodhicitta*) at the end of the second initiation, the *guhyābhīṣeka*.

Although these Swabians claimed that:

A man unified with God could rob from others, could lie or perjure himself without sin, and, if a servant, could give away the property of his master without license (*ibid.*),

that is again no more than weak antinomianism, not the strong form we have identified as antinomianism as a norm. In the Introduction I posed the problem of whether already in the pre-Tantric Mahāyāna a Bodhisattva could, would, or should perform

the noble but on face-value dastardly deed of liberating from his present life someone on the point of amassing demerit. As with the Protestant Antinomians discussed above, we have no evidence that such license, whether as a choice or a duty, was put into effect.

Whereas Tripiṭakamāla devalued the altruistic efforts of a Bodhisattva, for being too literalistic and hence impractical for the task, we saw that his appraisal was itself too literalistic and mistaken. Following the historical Buddha's own prioritization of intention over action, Bodhisattvas too were charged with cultivating a compassionate attitude rather than piecemeal practical compassion. In Tantric Buddhism, engagement with the world is not simply a matter of a passive mental stance, but must be enacted. It is true that the apologetic for such actions is that correct insight is the antidote to moral corruption, but the underlying reasoning must in the first place have been that it is precisely by means of this unconventional activity that one vividly learns to cut through such unreal conventional discriminations as between poison and its opposite. Is this then a zero-sum?

While the Swabians apparently denied the need for austerities, it was the pursuit of the ascetic *vita apostolica* which in fact united all other positions grouped together under the title of the heresy of the 'Free Spirit'. Many of them were laypeople, beghards and beguines. It is tempting to see an etymological coincidence between those terms and *bhikṣu*, if beghard (cf. beggar) could also be derived from the root 'to beg' (Skr *bhikṣ*). The Catholic Encyclopedia, however, is keen to exclude this meaning, and derives the word from the old Flemish *beghen* 'to pray' instead (HERBERMANN 1907:s.v.); begging for alms is thus secondary to the making of a request which is done also in prayer.

At all events, these lay religious clearly represented a threat to the establishment. Their anticlericalism was a commonplace of the medieval period, one which led to the Protestant Reformation. But that is not to say that they comprised any homogenous

organisation, let alone were social revolutionaries (although Norman COHN twisted the evidence to make them into early anarchistic millenarians, cf. LERNER 1972:219). It seems that a large proportion was made up of educated women, such as Marguerite Porete (burned in an *auto-da-fé* at Paris, 1310; LERNER *ibid.*:1) and Schwester Katrei, who offended because:

Not only is her union [with God] complete, but it is enduring, whereas in the orthodox tradition the mystical experience is never more than a fleeting glimpse of what can only be continuous in the future life. (*ibid.*:220).

LERNER emphasises that the writings of these people were anyway esoteric, intended for a small audience who could grasp the mysticism they preached (*ibid.*:206).

Taking these points one by one, what does the comparison reveal about Tantric Buddhist antinomianism? Yes, the Tantric form of Buddhism may well have begun outside the monasteries, necessarily so, given its insistence on the one norm of rejecting all norms, but we have seen how this situation came to be completely reversed, to the exclusion of lay practitioners. It is likely that the theory was early on adopted by reformers within those institutions, who had been struck by its unconventional possibilities. But, like the European traditions, there is no reason to think that this was a socio-political revolutionary movement, any more than was the historical Buddha's disregard for caste and ritual specialists. However, there are signs in the non-soteriological Tantras of the Kriyā class that Buddhists, in Khotan during the second half of the eighth century at least, were responding with powerful state and military ritual to attack (by the Tibetans), and to the fear of an imminent end of the Dharma, the Buddhist kind of millenarianism (cf. *Vimalaprabhāparipṛcchā*, especially chapter 2).

The rise of Tantric Buddhism has often been equated with the fall of Buddhism in India, and even held responsible for that

demise. Modern authors argue that the perceived decadence of Tantric Buddhism was like a canker on the root of the larger religion, crippling and finally killing it off:

[T]he Tāntric developments of Buddhism became most pronounced in eastern India under the Pālas and laid their killing influence on Nālandā's culture (DUTT 1962:344).

The Central Asian evidence connects better with the alternative explanation for Buddhism's end in India, that the coming of the Moslems brought it about. We know that Udantapura, for example, was razed to the ground around 1198 (*ibid.*:356–357), and Vikramaśīla, where Abhayākaragupta had been abbot and whence Atiśa was called to Tibet, effaced by 1235 (*ibid.*:359). And already in the sixth century Mihirakula the Hun (*Hūṇa*) devastated sites in Gandhara and Kashmir, and possibly as far to the south-east as Kośāmbī (*ibid.*:206–207).

These warrior invaders may well have mistaken the thick walls of an establishment built for introspection for a defensive fortress from which counter-attacks could be launched. One can imagine how the huge libraries of Buddhist monasteries would in themselves have represented a direct threat to the comparably extensive learning and scholarship of Islam. It was the very institutionalisation of Buddhism which made it a target and so vulnerable to destruction. Had it really been the non-monastic religion of lay practitioners, householders or renunciates, perhaps it could have survived as such. That alternative, together with the flight and re-establishment of religious leaders in exile in India, may explain the way that Buddhism in Tibet has persisted, in caves and at the family hearth, since the 'peaceful liberation' and Cultural Revolution of the Chinese, despite the mass destruction of its institutions.

Returning to the comparison with our European material, it is most improbable that the majority of Tantric Buddhist practi-

tioners were women, although we have seen that their initiation was definitely an option. Given the importance of sexual relations, one can at least say that for every male initiand there must have been a female consort, but it is possible that a single consort could play the part for more than one student. The biological differences between the two sexes might indeed entail a difference in their experience of the erotic initiations, but that question is beyond the scope of the present study.

Schwester Katrei's experience of a permanent transformation in the present life was the shared aspiration of Tantric Buddhists. According to them, their goal was in this respect different from that held up as a distant destination in the earlier Mahāyāna, where reincarnation was perceived to be harder to escape from, while an eternity in heaven seemed to some Christians to be irrelevant to their existence on earth. On the other hand, the apologetic for the sexual intercourse of initiation— 'getting the goal into one's sights'— does correspond to the 'fleeting glimpse' of orthodox Christian mysticism.

In common with the writers of the heresy of the 'Free Spirit' Tantric Buddhism was always esoteric, and in a far more regulated way. Even my own study transgresses the circle of exclusion around their tradition. It was for this reason, amongst others, that I decided to focus on the liminal moments of initiation, when one can still keep one foot outside the inner sanctum. Marguerite Porete went to the stake because uncomprehending eyes had fallen on her teachings. We must always take care not to judge absolutely what, in an unusual system like this, one might not be in a position to understand correctly.

Finally, LERNER concludes his discussion with the statement:

Considering the long period of excessive austerities that was part of the Free-Spirit program, it is impossible to believe that anyone embarked upon it in light-headed hopes of material gratification.
(*loc. cit.*:240)

Antinomianism as a norm is just that; antinomianism on its own would be anarchy, not a system offering goals and methods for their attainment. Tantric Buddhism would never have been a free-for-all. Whether the norm was outside the constraints of an institutional headquarters, or further normalised at its heart, it was a discipline, a religious one.

Nevertheless, the problem of material gratification is as old as the first successes of any tradition. Success brings rewards, which in turn attract those keen to reap the benefits thereof, rather than to repeat the sincere efforts which first led to worldly recognition. Every tradition— let alone individual agents— will be bound to respond to this vicious circle with self-regulation, reformation, and ultimately, as we may assume was the case with the coming together of ‘Tantric’ and Buddhism, transformation.

Sexual Initiation

One established means of patrolling these sensitive borders is, of course, initiation. I will end my dissertation with some conclusions derived from the particular form of the higher initiations into Higher Tantric Buddhism. Had it been appropriate to add a further sub-sub-title, it would have referred to these special rites. Sexual initiation is the paradigm here for the normalisation of antinomian behaviour, both in respect of the unusual formalizing of a complex of physical relations between two men and a single woman (or, occasionally, two women), and also in the further step taken of introducing celibate monastics into the equation. Both aspects demanded and received exegesis in the shape of Tantric Buddhist apologetics. That much we have discussed in Part II above. But what are the broader implications of this ritual?

In order to explain the motivation for adopting such practices, especially in the context of monasticism, some correspondence may be found in the folkloric account of the purpose and ultimate authorship of the *Amaruśataka* (Mādhavācārya, *Śaṅkaradigvijaya*

9, and Ānandagiri, *Śaṅkaravijaya* 58–59; cited SIEGEL 1983:4). Śaṅkara is reported to have engaged in debate with Maṇḍana Mīśra at the latter's home. There Mīśra's wife challenged the chaste ascetic:

How can you write off the entire realm of the phenomena as illusion, if you yourself never have experienced them where they are most particular— in sexuality and love? (HARDY 1994:508)

In acknowledgement of the force of her objection, Śaṅkara went on to himself reanimate the body of Amaru, the dead king of Kashmir, and so is explained the origin and inspiration for the famous compilation of love poetry, which supposedly:

become[s] innocent by association, acceptable to the chaste as dispassionate memos on theoretical erotics. (SIEGEL 1983:5)

Friedhelm HARDY follows his citation of Lee SIEGEL's account of this episode with discussion of similar examples in Indian culture of what he terms a 'click phenomenon' (*loc. cit.*: Chapter 23, 'Irreducible Particulars', p.510). Grammarians and philosophers explain the sudden comprehension of the meaning of a sentence as 'bursting forth' (*sphoṭa*; *sphuṭ* click), while aestheticians describe the evocation of associations in poetry as 'resonance' (*dhvani*). I have myself elsewhere offered a conjectural explanation of how Tantric Buddhist authors understood the functioning of their physical ritual in terms of the aesthetic experience analysed so carefully in the Indian science of secular aesthetic appreciation (ONIANs forthcoming). Crucial to that theory of aesthetics is the relationship between spontaneity and the gradual acquisition of the capability to be spontaneous (cf. HARDY *loc. cit.*:513).

One important Tantric Buddhist concept not discussed in detail in this dissertation is *sahaja* 'spontaneity'. The Mantranaya or Vajrayāna is also known as the Sahajayāna. Tantric enlightenment is *sahaja* 'spontaneous'. But it is near to impossible to attain

without the discipline which transforms one first into a fit receptacle, in aesthetic *rasa* theory a sensitive ‘connoisseur’ (*sahṛdaya*). According to the developed apologetics we have studied in Part I above, this process of transformation begins with earlier forms of Buddhism and is [only/indeed *eva*] brought to the point of fruition with the Higher Tantric Buddhist initiations, followed by post-initiatory practice. The marking of the exemplary experience of the goal during the third initiation, in tandem with the fourth initiation’s verbal identification of the relationship between example and exemplified enlightenment, represents the liminal and penultimate stage of preparation on the path to permanent realisation.

But apart from Friedhelm HARDY’s emphasis on the particularity of sensual experience in his use of the apocryphal Śaṅkara story, that parable’s objection can also be expressed another way:

that true wisdom must include an understanding of all aspects of life. (SIEGEL 1983:4)

Before—if not rather than—cloistering oneself away, in withdrawal from the seductions of the phenomenal world, does one not first need to look those demons in the face? In early Buddhism such a need was answered with the practice of ‘meditation on the impurities [of the body]’ (Skr *aśubhabhāvanā*), usually performed in a charnel-ground, where one can look directly at corpses. This of course relates to the historical Buddha’s revelatory three sights while still a cosseted prince, of an old man, a sick man and a dead one. Until then he had not even been aware of the existence of *duḥkha*, let alone its cessation (the religious life— his fourth sight).

Some might say that the sexual relations of Higher Tantric Buddhist initiations are as revolting as meditation on a festering corpse. One might say that the one has taken the place of the other. Both are examples of the spiritual exploitation of extreme

phenomenal realism. Both are about impermanence, whether of the physical body or of even a blissful experience that is so very similar to enlightenment.

By translating *abhiṣeka* initiation, instead of consecration, I would like also to maintain an awareness of the special context of the intercourse we have been studying. Is this unusual ritual comparable to the initiation by ordeal recorded by myriad ethnographers? Initiation rites are said to be among the most important social institutions of 'early' humans. Most commonly they mark the transition at puberty from being a child to full adulthood, with simultaneous entry into the community's religious cult. Regular features of the rite include seclusion, mutilation (circumcision etc.) and the taking of a new name.

As would thus be expected, there is, for example, among the preliminary initiations of Higher Tantric Buddhism (the large group which became together the first, or *kalāśa-*, *abhiṣeka*) a name-giving ritual, *nāmābhiṣeka* (cf. eg. *Oṃ Vajrasattva tvām abhiśīṅcāmi vajranāmābhiṣekataḥ...* SaṃĀbhVi p.413). But more importantly, I believe, the higher initiations do indeed represent a ritual by ordeal. Just as in certain societies an initiand must demonstrate his manhood by killing an animal, or undergoing painful mutilation (eg. Polynesian tattooing), so our Tantric Buddhist males must apparently literally prove their manliness in sexual intercourse. One may assume that this was not always an easy proposition, particularly in the case of a previously celibate monk. The candidate had to be tested perhaps, to confirm that he would be tough enough for the difficult way that is Tantric Buddhism—'for those of keen faculties'.

Similarly, Friedhelm HARDY reports that:

If we happened to surprise two people involved in the act of making love, or if such an act were actually performed on stage, we would burst out laughing— so an Indian text says. For in real life this is an extremely funny and unusual thing to do. It

is a ludicrous act, when witnessed from the outside. (HARDY 1994:512, with references in a footnote)

One of the texts he refers to mentions

embarrassment, disgust, sexual desire and so on, which arise as one's own mental moods, and with which one becomes pre-occupied, thus removing the possibility of even calling this an aesthetic experience.

(*lajjājugupsāspṛhādisvocatittavṛtṭyantarodayavyagrataṃ kāmā svārasakathāpi syāt*. Abhinavabhāratī vol. I:278, cited in MASSON and PATWARDHAN 1969:64, fn.4.)

It seems that erotic intercourse was perceived to have the potential to arouse the full range of human sentiments, making it a kind of key should one desire to unlock their power to distract and disturb.

This question, of the relationship between physical and psychological experience, and especially how in Tantric Buddhism the one is supposed to affect the other for the good, is the big topic which time and space have not permitted me to tackle in the present work. It is one to which I intend to return.

For now I must conclude with the sincere hope that this dissertation has gone some way to demonstrate the real difficulties faced by monastic authors in explaining their adopted antinomian tradition, even if that apologetic has since been forgotten. Apart from occasional unconfirmed rumours of carefully guarded secret events, in modern Tibetan communities and in the Kathmandu Valley these initiation rituals are never performed in the flesh.

Appendix:
Sujayaśrīgupta's *Abhiṣekanirukti*

The Explanation of Initiation

Sujayaśrīgupta’s ‘The Explanation of Initiation’

1. I bow down to the all-pervasive Great Bliss, [which is] the Dharma body, the basis of the [other] two bodies, permanent [and] Vajradhara. [Now I] will analyse the meaning [and function] of the [higher Tantric] initiation[s].
2. [Some] think that the goal [to be realised through Tantric *sādhana*] is Bliss, excellent in its activity (*vr̥ttyudāra*) and contemporaneous [with the Wisdom Knowledge initiation] indeed. That is wrong, however, because [of the unwanted consequence that] release would directly follow that [Wisdom Knowledge] initiation.¹
3. How can [the bliss of the initiation which is] excellent [and] dependent on something else arise spontaneously?² And how can it be right that that which ends should be the goal, for release would then be destructible?
4. Therefore the goal [must be] undefiled [and] without end, Absolute Bliss, like space [and] capable of activity for the benefit of [the beings in] the world.
5. It is the body of the Saviours, known as the Dharmakāya, while the [other] two bodies which are based on the [Dharmakāya] are characterised by Enjoyment and Emanation.
6. In the unsurpassed Mahayāna, these two [bodies] too are the goal of Heroes, in order to be able to fulfil the needs of [both] themselves and others; for otherwise such [activity] would be impossible.
7. [The first] body of these [three] is to be realised in the Pāramitānaya through [mental] cultivation. It is called the Dharma [Body] of the Great Sage, [the Buddha,] unimaginable [and] whose sole nature is the light.
8. [The Dharmakāya] is manifestly attained on the strength of the cultivation of the Path of the Perfection of Wisdom, as are the pair [of *kāya*] based upon the [first], through the practice[s]

¹ Cf. discussion above p.202.

² Cf. TibI rang dbang grub pa, *svavaśato.

of Giving and so forth.

9. In this [Path of the Perfection of Wisdom] the three bodies can thus be realised, by means of the series of Perfections Giving, Morality, Forbearance, Heroic Energy, Meditation [and] Wisdom.

10. In the [*Guhyasamāja* and related] Yogatantra [text]s, the [three bodies] should be realised by means of the seal of the form of the deity, [that is to say] by means of central deities and [their] entourages, and by [their] emission and reabsorption.

11. Sometimes, however, the body known as 'Innate', which is the basis of the [other] two, is to be realised in brief, through the inconceivable power of the mental cultivation of Great Bliss.

12. 13. And, the [remaining] pair of bodies are to be realised in the Great Yoga called 'Innate', through meditations on the arising of every last constituent of reality from the [ultimate] Reality [which is 'Innate'], and also by means of construing physical, [vocal and mental] activity as the embodiment of that [reality], which are reckoned as secondary forms [of that reality, and so are] causes of the accumulation of merit.

14. Therefore, in all the [Yoga and Yoginī] Tantras, one should fully mark the Dharmakāya through [the third] initiation and by means of the [consort] seal, according to convention[al symbolic correspondences, gone in to in great detail later in this text], and due to the [actual]³ similarity [of the bliss experienced with the consort to the Bliss which is the Dharmakāya].⁴

15. But some assert that the [Dharmakāya] alone is that which should be marked, because it is the [most] important.⁵ Others claim that one should mark that very [Dharmakāya], here [in the third initiation, but] together with the means for its accomplishment.⁶

16. Yet other scholars proclaim that here, in the Wisdom [Knowledge] Initiation,⁷ all three bodies are to be separately marked,

3 Cf. TibI ngo bo nyid kyis.

4 Cf. discussion above p.205.

5 The first position below (P1).

6 The second position below (P2).

7 Cf. TibI shes rab ye shes dbang bskur.

by means of the consort.⁸

The opinion of [those who hold] the first of these positions⁹ runs as follows:

The most important fruit, known as the Dharmakāya, is realised through [mental] cultivation according to the Yogatantra [system]s in the form of the completely pure Dharmadhātu. Moreover, it could not be cultivated unless it had [first] been realised.

[The Dharmakāya] is the transformed state of the storehouse [consciousness], the abode of the latent impressions¹⁰ of all the totally pure Buddha qualities, in which all the seeds which are defiled latent impressions have been destroyed. Like the wishful-filling gem it is active for the benefit of the whole world. It is the basis of the Enjoyment and Emanation Bodies, beyond thought [and] consisting of [nothing but] Great Bliss.

Nor, now, [in preparatory practice before the higher initiations,] is there a realisation with that [Dharmakāya] as its object, for that would imply that if one could attain such [an experience of the fruit before the initiation], cultivation [thereafter] would be pointless. Nor is it logical that there should come into being [the fruit, which] is dependent on the transcendental path [of post-initiatory practice], until [an example of] that [fruit] is before one.

One must, therefore, see, according to the teacher's instructions, that the [orgasmic] realisation, which is had between [the moments] of the semen remaining within the glans [of the penis] and progressing out of it, is an example [of the ultimate realisation of everything as Dharmakāya]. [It] has the form of Great Bliss,

⁸ The third position below (P₃).

⁹ I.e. at v.15ab above: Only the Dharmakāya should be marked, because it is most important. Cf. discussion above p.206ff.

¹⁰ Cf. TibI adds *sa bon*, *bīja.

appears as nondual, [and] counteracts all other perceptions. [The experience is had] while one is in union with a consort whose [vital] statistics have been taught in the Tantras. [It is to be seen as an example, both] because of its resemblance to the Truth, since there is the appearance of nothing other than Great Bliss, beyond differentiation, which is the mental cultivation of that [goal] characterised by the consort presided over by all the Tathāgatas, and, because of the force of one's later conviction about reality that this is indeed that.

Moreover, those who aim at liberation, who are desirous of experiencing the Ultimate Truth, mark well that experience of the Ultimate Truth, though it be [only] the exemplified, by means of this example, thanks to their certain knowledge of the [example at least] because of its similarity to experiencing that [exemplified]. And when that knowledge of the Ultimate Truth has been ascertained [to be exemplary], according to the teacher's instructions, that same Ultimate Reality which has been marked should be cultivated, carefully, continually [and] together with the pledges. [This is done] in deity yoga of the generation and completion stages, yoga of the Innate [Bliss/Knowledge], and the cultivation of space.

Now, once the cultivation of that [experience of the Ultimate Reality] has been perfected all three Bodies are attained very quickly and easily, thanks to the cultivation of [particular] forms of the deities and so on, and the power of the pledges. Thus one should mark the Dharmakāya alone during the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, for it is the main thing, the basis of the [other] two bodies. Here ends the opinion of those who hold the first position.

Next, the opinion of [those who hold] the second of these positions¹¹ runs as follows:

¹¹ I.e. at v.15cd: One should mark the Dharmakāya together with the means

Even if [one knows that] the goal is Great Bliss, undefiled [and] without end, nevertheless, it cannot be accomplished without the means for its accomplishment (*sādhana*). Therefore just as [one should know] the [goal, the Dharmakāya], one should also know the means for its accomplishment. And, the means for its accomplishment is a realisation (*jñāna*) which in the Yogatantra[s] is sealed by all the Tathāgatas with forms of the deities, [*maṇḍalas*, mantras], and so on, in accordance with the pledges.¹² [The means] is [also] the mundane path of the accumulations [of merit and wisdom, as well as] the transcendental [paths of] insight [and] mental cultivation. And that [realisation which is the means] is to be well marked during the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, right from the beginning, as it arises, as the sign. Inasmuch as it is also the cause; cf. TibI rgyu. of the arising of a realisation which is the marking (or: has the marks) of the Truth.

As for that [experience, it has been taught] in brief in the [*Guhya*]*samāja* and other [Yoga Tantric texts]. [There are described] the sight of the body¹³ of the consort, dear to the practitioner [and] whose vital statistics have been described in the Tantras, the touch of her firm breasts and the rest [of her body], the hearing of her impassioned cries, the taste of her lower lip, and the smell of musk on her limbs. These [sensations] merge together just like an illusion, and joy is born together with them. This [first part of the worship] should from the very beginning be marked as of the nature of the Tathāgatas Vairocana and the others, [and] the Vajra Lords, Rūpavajra, [Sparśavajra, Gandhavajra and so on up to the sixth, Dharmadhātuvajra]. In it is contained the Path of the Accumulations (*sambhāramārga*).

Making that same consort one’s own by a deep embrace, and the firmness of her breasts and the rest [of her body, both have]

for its accomplishment. Cf. discussion above p.213ff.

¹² Cf. TibI mngon par rtogs pa ji lta ba bzhin du, *yathābhisamayam.

¹³ TibI adds: (gzugs) la sogs pa; *ādi.

the nature of [the element] earth [and are] the object of a tactile realisation. The mind does not wander elsewhere or perceive external objects since only [the mind] itself appears. Joy too arises together with such realisations (*jñāna*). [All the above from making the consort one's own onwards] are to be marked (*lakṣaṇīya*) straightaway as the Lord Vairocana, Locanā [and the *kleśa*] Delusion, at the level of enjoyment (*bhogavyavasthā*) Moharati and Mohavajra, and at the level of means the marking of 'worship,' the first limb, in which is included the [four] Stages of Insight (*nirvedhabhāgīya*-). For it is taught [in the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*] that:

The union of goal and means is called 'worship'. (GST 18.176ab)

Here and in the subsequent performance[s], the sense is that the wise teacher and student must emanate, retract and [inbetween have act for the benefit of sentient beings,] Vairocana and [the other four Buddhas], who are the summing up of all the Tathāgatas, and the [four] Goddesses Buddhalocanā and so on, and Mohavajra and the other [four] Bodhisattvas, and Moharati and the other [four] Goddesses, according to the instruction.

Next one must experience by means of the consort the uniting of lotus [vagina] with vajra [penis]. [The vagina] of that same consort, who [represents] the Dharmadhātu, is triangular and hollow within, by virtue of the voidness [of own-existence of the trinity] body, speech and mind. [It is] broad above symbolising the vertical succession of stages. [It is] of the nature of the totally pure Dharmadhātu which is its object. [The penis] is a firm and solid rod, inasmuch as it has the nature of indivisible perfect insight. [It] faces upwards because emptiness like space is its support. [The uniting of such a lotus with such a vajra must be experienced as] the seeing of the [otherwise] invisible Dharmadhātu, [which seeing] has the nature of the undefiled Path of Insight (*darśanamārga*-) [and is] characterised by insight into the all-pervasive Dharmadhātu.

Moreover, during this [process], the realisation of the uniting of vajra and lotus, and the aversion to their separation [which would be a] disjunction, and the moistness which, as the element water, is their [so to speak] support, and the joy co-emergent with these [experiences, all these] are to be marked straightaway as the Lord Akṣobhya, the [*kleśa*] Hatred, [and] Māmakī, at the level of enjoyment Dveṣarati and Dveṣavajra, and at the level of means ‘subsidiary means,’ the second limb. For it is taught [in the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*] that:

The union of vajra and padma is held to be the ‘subsidiary means’.
(GST 18.176cd)

[Next] one must realise by means of the consort the Investigation [Knowledge] of every form, which is characterised by multiplication [and] is of the nature of the undefiled path of meditation. [One experiences this Investigation Knowledge] by [means of] the penis, which is of the nature of Perfect Knowledge, [and] repeatedly, with complete absorption, enters into and withdraws from the broad vagina, whose form is the Dharmadhātu, of the same Dharmadhātu consort.

At that [time], one realises frictional contact with the interior of [her] vagina, and, the heat generated from [that] friction is the object of that [experience,] the element fire. [These two] and the joy co-emergent with these [experiences, are all] to be marked straight away as the Lord Amitābha, the [*kleśa*] Passion, [and] Pāṇḍarā, [and] Rāgarati and Rāgavajra at the level of enjoyment, [and] the third limb, called ‘means’ at the level of means. For it is taught that:

The ‘means’ is taught to be causing [the penis] to move, together with [the mantra] hūṃ phaṭ. (GST 18.177ab)

Further, at that very level [of sexual union,] the means, [the male participant,] and the wisdom, [his female consort,] have the nature of all the Tathāgatas [and] their Wisdom [consorts. They

experience] elevation of the mind (or: arrogance) and delight (or: delirious pleasure). [The former is generated] by means of the pride in being, [respectively,] the active and passive participants of the union, [which pride] is born from their extreme passion, [and delight is generated] by the similarly [passionately begotten] sensation of erotic bliss. [That elevation of the mind and delight are] to be experienced, together with the consort, as the Lord Ratnasambhava, [who is the Buddha of] the [minor *kleśas*] pride (*māna*) and intoxication (*mada*), [and] within whom is contained the path of distinction (*viśeṣamārga*). Moreover, [these minor *kleśas*] should in fact be included with Rāgavajra, because of [their] being equivalent to passion [and] being mental state[s]. Therefore, this is not a separate limb [called] ‘means’.

Thereupon, [the couple who personify] wisdom and means have the realisation (*jñāna*) of the ultimate erotic engagement, which has as its object the totally pure Dharmadhātu, [and] is characterised by activity directed towards the goal. [The couple] appear as nondual. Through their superlative mental cultivation they have generated the Highest Joy (*paramānanda*). For them the activity of [the three *kleśas*] Delusion, Hatred and Passion has become indistinguishable. [The student] should experience [all of this,] within which is included the Path of Completion (*niṣṭhāmārga*), by means of the consort.

Moreover, during that [experience,] the element wind is what drives the *bodhicitta* [semen,] co-emergent with Great Bliss (*mahā-sukha*), along the channel at the tip of the *vajra* [penis.] The knowledge, which has as its object the tactile sensation of the moving semen [and] which does not cause one to act in any of the ways laid down in erotic manuals, drives the penis. [The penis] is itself Perfect Knowledge, directed in action towards the goal, [and] immediately accomplishes the fruit. The sensation of [one’s] own form, whose single essence is [the three *kleśas*]

passion, hatred and delusion, has as its mark the realisation of internal contact, [and] has the Highest Joy (*paramānanda*) as its nature.

[These factors] and the Joy (*prīti*) born together therewith should straightaway be marked respectively as: the Lord Amoghasiddhi, Jealousy, Desire (*kāma*), and [the goddess] Samayatārā. At the level of enjoyment [they are to be marked as] Samayavajra and Vajrarati. At the level of means, [all this] should be marked as the fourth limb, called ‘great means’. [It is so identified] because the activity of passion, hatred and delusion has been calmed, because [one is] charmed (*yogita-*) with extremely intense bliss, and because of the continuous presence of the fruit. For it is taught:

The ‘great means’ is taught to be pacified, own bliss [and] own nature. (GST 18.177cd).

Here at this very level of four enjoyments at the time of the Wisdom [Knowledge] Initiation, one should with concentrated mind mark [the following] one after another as being Yamāntaka, Prajñāntaka, Padmāntaka and Vighnāntaka together with their respective consorts:¹⁴ i.e. the marking of the equivalences, the realisation of the destruction, [and] the marking of the destruction of all the kleśas [and] mental and [moral] obscurations, of, [namely]: Passion, Hatred, Delusion and [Pride and Intoxication], whose activity is arising fully, and of the marks of their latent impressions, become of one flavour.

Of those the knowledge of the destruction of delusion is Yamāntaka. The knowledge of the destruction of hatred is Prajñāntaka. The knowledge of the destruction of passion is Padmāntaka. [And] the knowledge of the destruction of all the obstructions is Vighnāntaka, because he protects against obstacles to obtaining the fruit, [i.e.] the Dharmakāya. For it is taught [in the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*] that:

¹⁴ But these deities do not normally have consorts, and the consort of a deity is usually prajñā rather than mudrā.

Delusion, through the enjoyment of delusion is the destruction of delusion, Yamāntakṛt. (GST 18.58ab)

[And the passage which] begins thus [continues] up to:

The knowledge of the destruction of all the obstructions is taught to be Vighnāntakṛt. (GST 18.61cd)

Thus, then, [the four means] are hostile to the [*kleśas*] Delusion, Hatred and Passion etc. and their latent impressions. Within them are included the Paths of the Accumulations, of Insight and Meditation, [and] they are on the levels of faithful practice and pure conviction, ripening, and free of all the defilements. [These are] the causes of obtaining the experience of the absolutely pure Dharmadhātu, characterised in the glorious [*Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*] and [other Yoga Tantras] as ‘worship’, ‘subsidiary means’, ‘means’, and ‘great means’. During the Wisdom [Knowledge] Initiation, [they are] sealed by all the Tathāgatas with the seal[s] of, respectively, embrace, penetration, making [the penis] move around, and the generation of knowledge. [They are] the causes of obtaining the perfect mark of the Great Vajradhara, whose single flavour is Great Bliss, [who] has become the example and [is] the exemplified [itself]. Because they are causes of [all] this, the marking of the four means should be experienced here.

Thereupon all activity is purified, by the purification of the defilements of [moral and] intellectual obscurations. And because activity is purified a pure fruit is won. For it is taught [in the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*] that:

When the moral and adamantine [i.e. intellectual] obscurations are purified, all activity is purified. Because all activity is purified the fruit born from activity is pure. (GST 18.62)

Thus the goal which has the mark of the Dharmakāya is to be attained by all the Buddhas. [It is] unobstructed, undefiled [and]

without end, non-dual [and] Great Bliss, the absolutely pure Dharmadhātu and the experience thereof, the basis of the Enjoyment Body which is the Mirror, Equality and Investigation Knowledges, [and] the source of the Emanation Body which is the Service Knowledge. Therefore here in the Way of Mantras the means for [effecting] that [goal] is to be marked by means of the consort who is the example.

Therefore, straight after the marking of the means [of achieving this], when one is in union with the best part of the body of the consort, [her vagina,] after the *bodhicitta* [semen] has gone to the crown of the glans of the penis, [one should] do everything one can to hold it there, by squeezing the head of the penis in the pericarp of the [vaginal] lotus according to the teachings, or by practising breath control by means of mantras such as *phaṭ*. Born together with that [*bodhicitta* semen] is the signifier of the Dharmakāya in the form of the absolutely pure Dharmadhātu and its experience, which appears only as Great Bliss, in which all sensory activity has ceased, unimaginable [and] beyond analysis.

[Then] one should perfectly mark [that Great Bliss] with concentrated mind, thinking, ‘according to reality this (*idam*) [*bodhicitta*] is indeed that [Great Bliss]’, with the conviction [that] the example and exemplified are indivisible. [For, the *bodhicitta*] is the example of the [state of being] Great Vajradhara which can be attained, because all the Tathāgatas agreed so unanimously, since it appears as pleasure alone, nondual and ineffable. Once [Great Bliss] has been marked, [and] has been stabilised, one should cultivate the practice of the pledges, according to the teachings, carefully, without interruption and for a long time. [This is to be done] in deity yoga according to the realisations, according to the *samayas* in [the mantric visualisation of] a *hūṃ* in the moon in the heart and so on, in the Innate yoga, [and] in the meditation on thunderbolt in the sky [i.e. sexual union]. In this way one

very quickly and easily attains what one cultivates. Here ends the opinion of those who hold the second position.

Next, the opinion of [those who hold] the third of these positions¹⁵ runs as follows:

One should not mark the Dharmakāya alone, whether with or without the means for its accomplishment. [This is] because in the Mahāyāna the [Dharmakāya] is not the only goal, because one can not [act] for the benefit of others by means of that alone. What then [should be marked]? The further pair of Bodies, within which are included the four Wisdoms, is also the goal.

For it is argued in the Pāramitānaya that the main goal is that called the Dharmakāya, which corresponds to the Dharmadhātu, and the experience of the Dharmadhātu which is contained therein. And a further fruit based on the [Dharmakāya] is that called the Enjoyment Body which has as its nature the following three Wisdoms: the Mirror Wisdom which reflects all forms of all things; the Equality Wisdom which awakens one to [the truth of] the equality of all Buddhas; and the Investigation Wisdom which likewise analyses all things in all [their] known forms. [There is] also the fruit called Emanation Body which is the Service Wisdom characterised by its activity for the benefit of the whole world in all forms.

Similarly, even in the Mantranaya, according to the pledges [and] according to the tantras, the main goal is that called Dharmakāya, i.e. Vajradhara in the form of the totally pure Dharmadhātu and Akṣobhya in the form of the totally pure experience of that [Dharmadhātu]. [Here in the Mantranaya] too there is a second fruit, based on the Dharmakāya, namely the Enjoyment Body. [Its] nature is Vairocana who is the Mirror Wisdom which reflects all forms of the whole world, Ratnasambhava who is the

¹⁵ I.e. at v.16ab: All three bodies are to be separately marked, by means of the consort. C.f. discussion above p.232ff.

Equality Wisdom which awakens one to the [ultimate] equality of all Buddhas, and Amitābha who is the Investigation Wisdom which analyses all forms of all things experienced. Likewise here too there is a further fruit to be achieved, namely the Emanation Body, i.e. Amoghasiddhi, the Service Wisdom incarnate characterised by its activity for the benefit of the world, [and] all pervasive. Thus all three Bodies are the goal, here [in the Mantranaya].

That very thing which is the goal should also be marked, according to the conventions, by means of consorts presided over by all the Tathāgatas. Therefore, when, during the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, the *bodhicitta* [semen] mounts to the jewel [tip] of the penis it should be stabilised right there by the method described above in the second position, according to the [guru’s] instructions. Then a mental sensation [of Bliss] is experienced which arises together with that [semen. This sensation is] without distinction with regard to the [apparently distinct] appearance of self and others; [it is] purely the highest Great Bliss, nondual, and in it all activity [of the senses] has ceased; [it] has transcended verbal discrimination, abides only in sensations of itself, and is [clear] as space. That is the marking of the Dharmakāya. For it is taught in the *Guhyasiddhi* that:

As long as the yogin retains his semen, he has an indescribable uninterrupted [experience of] the bliss born of the Ānandas.
(*Guhyasiddhi* 8.36cd–37ab)

The experience of the enjoyment of the *bodhicitta* [semen] is the mark of the Enjoyment Body. [It is] experienced in the form of Bliss, externally directed, produced from the contact with the semen moving within the penis, unrestricted in locus but apparently restricted under the influence of its object, [the physical lotus of the consort.] The marking of the Emanation Body is the experiencing by the jewel [glans] of the penis of the complete satisfaction of that [experience], produced by the enjoyment of that semen which is pumped into the consort’s vagina.

Thus one should mark those three Bodies by means of the consort [and] according to the *abhisamayas*,¹⁶ and stabilise [them]. One very quickly and easily attains the three Bodies by mental cultivation together with the pledges with a consort in the form of a deity, [or] a consort in the form of a mantra, according to instructions [and] according to the *abhisamayas*, by means of the root Sahajayoga and by the second form [thereof] arisen after that [Sahajayoga]. Here ends the opinion of those who hold the third position.

Now [also] in the Yoginī tantras such as the *Hevajra* [all] three bodies are indeed the goal. It is correct to mark them during the Wisdom [Knowledge] Initiation. But some have said that only the Dharmakāya should be marked, in the form of Great Bliss [and] the Innate, because it is the preeminent [goal].¹⁷ Others have said that it is indeed that [Dharmakāya] which should be marked, [but] together with the means for its accomplishment, [i.e.] together with means such as *vicitra*.¹⁸

Others [again] have said that it is alternatively the pair of Bodies, namely the Dharma and Enjoyment [Bodies], which are to be marked, according to the pledges [and] in accordance with the reality of the consort which is agreed upon by all the Tathāgatas. For it is argued [by them] that the experience of pleasure which appears as pure Great Bliss, like space [and] formless, is the mark of the Dharmakāya whose form is the *maṇḍala* of *yoginīs*. But the experience of the semen which arises together with that [pleasure], [white] as jasmine [and] the moon, should be marked as the experience of the Enjoyment Body in the form of the glorious Heruka.¹⁹ For it is taught [in the Hevajratantra] that:

Concealed it is [white] as jasmine; revealed it is in the form of

16 But cf. Tibl brda ji lta bu bzhin du, *yathāsamayam.

17 P1 applied to the Yoginī tantras.

18 P2 applied to the Yoginī tantras.

19 Here the *yoginīcakra* is higher, as the Dharmakāya, than Heruka, as the Saṃbhogakāya, and these two are in the relationship of Wisdom and Means.

Bliss. (HT II.iv.30ab)

The Lord is in the form of semen; [his] lover is taught to be the Bliss thereof. (HT I.viii.50ab)

And this [pair of Bodies] should be marked between the Highest and Cessation [Ānandas]. That is the opinion of those who know reason and scripture. For it is taught that:

One should perceive that which is to be marked [i.e. the goal] between the Highest and Cessation [*ānandas*, and then] consolidate it.

And

And one should mark that at the beginning of the Cessation [Ānanda], [it being] free of the [other] three Ānandas. (HT I.x.18cd)

One could object that Great Bliss cannot be the goal, [both] because it is not peaceful, and because in this very [context] of the *Hevajratantra* its being the goal is contradicted. For it is taught:

Therefore the Blissful [state] is not [credited] with the name ‘Reality’, for Bliss is [merely] one of the [five] great elements. (HT I.x.40cd)

Another [reason bliss cannot be related to the goal] is because in [texts and traditions] of the Way of Perfections, such as the Perfection of Wisdom, only the non-dual is taught as the goal. For, even if there is a difference between the Ways (or: methods *naya*) [of Perfections and Mantras], their [positions with regard to] reality cannot be different, because of the unwanted consequence that there would not be [one true] reality.

Surely, [one may object,] there must be a difference in fruits if there is a difference in means. For [in daily life] one sees that

from different causes come different fruits, as for example [is the case with the different seeds] of rice shoots and barley shoots. Otherwise it would necessarily follow that [those specific causes] could not be productive.

[But this analogy, and hence the argument,] do not apply. [For,] a difference in causes brings about a difference in fruits when the fruit is developmental or transformational, but not when it is something to be attained. For such a fruit, a difference in means brings about a difference only in [the manner of] its attainment, not in its nature. After all, in this Mahāyāna, there is no difference, in that the [shared] principal goal to be attained has the form of the Dharmakāya, of one essence with the light [of pure consciousness, clear] as space, [and] unconditioned.

Therefore, since the [afore-mentioned Great Bliss] is not the goal, the [goal] should not be marked at the time of the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation. Nor should that [Dharmakāya which is the goal] ‘be marked between the Highest and Cessation Joys,’ for then the form of Bliss is overwhelming. [A final reason is that] there is no experience then of the ultimate Release (*nirvṛti*), whose flavour is peace²⁰ alone, [and] is characterised by satisfaction (*kr̥takṛtyatā*).

Therefore, one should mark the Highest Release at the end of the Cessation [Joy. It is] characterised by satisfaction, having the single flavour of peace²¹ alone. [One can do this when] satisfied through the destruction of [both] passion and dispassion, with all notions destroyed, [and] in union with the *samaya* consort²² (or: equipped with consort and pledges). For it is taught in the Tantra that:

[The highest goal] is established at the end of the Cessation [Joy].
(Guhyasiddhi 3.8b)

20 Cf. TibI rab tu gsal shing, *prakāśa.

21 Cf. TibI rab tu gsal ba, *prakāśa.

22 Cf. TibI dam tshig gi phyag rgya.

So say certain teachers.

Others say that that [argument] is wrong. For in all the Mahāyāna the goal is indeed Great Bliss, whose single flavour is peace,²³ because, just like the light, Bliss²⁴ too is the nature of the unobscured mind. For a thing's unobstructed form, [if it has one,] is its nature. For as the form of the light [is the nature] of mind, whose characteristic is the light, so also the unobstructed form of unobscured mind is Bliss. Because one needs only this [unobstructed form] to establish that something is something's nature, if the [form Bliss] were not there when that [unobscured mind] exists then it could not ever exist, since the sign is not different.

Surely, [one might here object,] it has not been demonstrated that [Bliss] is the unobstructed [nature of the unobscured mind;] for the form 'Bliss' too is obstructed, by [virtue of its] separation from [the conventional ontological qualifications] one [or] many, like the form 'blue.' Thus, just as this form blue shines forth in a spatial dimension, so too does the form Bliss. That is why someone hot in the summer heat feels bliss in only as many parts of the body as are plunged into [cool]²⁵ water.

[But] this [argument against Bliss being the unobstructed nature of the unobscured mind] is wrong. For in that [example of physical refreshment] there is the shining forth in a spatial dimension of the object of a tactile experience, which is a special kind of internal object of touch, [and] not of bliss, because [that bliss] is characterised only by being something favourable, and because one cannot apply the argument to [bliss of refuting its being] one or many, [and therefore one cannot prove it to be nonexistent]. Hence, since the nature of the unobscured mind is also the form Bliss, like the light, where there is [Bliss] there can

²³ Cf. TibI. gsal zhing, *prakāśa.

²⁴ Cf. TibI. *mahāsukha.

²⁵ Cf. Tib II bsil ba'i.

be no dimming of the [light].

Moreover, the very absence of mind cannot be demonstrated [for three reasons]. [Firstly] because there can be no valid means of cognition at all of the non-existence of mind inasmuch as it is not the object of [any] sensation; [secondly] because of the unwanted consequence that there could be no [activity] for the benefit of others; and [finally] because it is contradicted by scripture. Nor does [the mind] in a blissful mode have the form of an absence of peace, since all the *kleśas*, subsidiary *kleśas* and their latent impressions cannot stick to that undefiled Bliss.

Nor, even in the [teachings of] the Way of Perfections, is the goal, namely the Dharmakāya, nothing but peace [and] separate from the form bliss. Rather, the Lord realised that there were those who could be disciplined [unto Enlightenment] by dispassion [alone], who were afraid because of feeling that where there is bliss there lurks passion. [So], concealing [from them] its blissful form he taught the goal to be nothing but peace, non-dual, pure light [and] characterised by the Perfection of Wisdom. But he [also] perceived people who could be disciplined [unto Enlightenment] by means of great passion, [and so] in the Mantranaya revealed the goal to have indeed the form of the highest Great Bliss, not illuminated [by anything other than itself, clear] as space, having peace as its nature, pure light [and] non-dual. [Between these two teachings] there is no contradiction.

Moreover, in the Way of the Perfections too [the goal] is tremendous [and] peaceful Great Bliss, even not taking into account [what happens at] the [highest, tenth] Buddha stage without obstructions. This [Bliss] is said to be Great [already] at the eighth Bodhisattva Stage. For it is taught—

Through that [knowledge free of mental constructions (*nirvikalpajñānāt*, in the previous verse)] the Bodhisattva attains Bliss without mental construction, peaceful, unwavering, the best, under control, [and both] like and unlike [other blisses]. (*Avikalpa-*

praveśadhāraṇī)

And, as for what has been said [above, that] in the *Hevajra* [tantra] itself it is contradicted that Bliss is the goal, that too is wrong. For in that [line, HT I.x.40cd quoted above,] it is not Great Bliss, undefiled [and clear] as space that is rejected as the goal. What is [rejected there] then, [you may well ask?] [The Lord Hevajra] rejected that [bliss of sexual union as the goal] because he was concerned lest someone suspect that [such an] example bliss, defiled [and] perishable, should be the goal.

And as for the statement that it is the state of satisfaction, characterised as the highest Release, which should be marked then [at the end of the Cessation [Joy], and not Great Bliss, because of the phrase:

[The highest goal] is established at the end of the Cessation [Joy]
(Guhyasiddhi 3.8b cited above),

that too is wrong. For, in that [phrase,]

at [the time] with the Cessation [Joy] at its end

is in fact a *bahuvrīhi* compound. As for the [*Hevajra*] quote:

But the Innate [Joy] is final. (HT I.viii.32d)

that too must be understood to mean that the [Innate Joy] is to be cultivated [at the time with the Cessation Joy at its end, since] ‘finally’ [means] by elimination, because the [other] three [Joys] are not involved.

Moreover, the [deluded] idea is that at the end of the Cessation Joy one should mark [an experience] like the sky, whose only nature is peace, non-dual, free of [both] verbal expression and desire, [and] without [either] passion or dispassion. But that would be impossible, because at that stage there is no non-dual experience, for the [female,] Wisdom, and the [male,] Means,

[once again] perceive manifold objects. Nor is [the experience] free of verbal expression, because one has mental constructions with regard to the plurality of things one has experienced. Nor [indeed] is it without passion and dispassion, because dispassion arises if the bodily fluids have not accumulated, and passion arises again when the bodily fluids have accumulated. And [so the experience] is not without desire, for that same [practitioner who has accumulated his bodily fluids] has a longing for further sexual pleasure.

If discriminatory appearances [could be made to] fall away [simply] by making the effort to close one's eyes and the [other doors of the senses] and suppressing mental constructions, then employment²⁶ of the consort would be fruitless, because one could succeed at that [falling away of discriminatory appearances] by [this] other way.

If [you say] that the state of complete fulfilment, which has the form of Supreme Bliss (or: Release), cannot be attained without enjoyment of the consort's lotus [vagina, we] disagree. For, such a state of complete fulfilment can be produced even by feasting, massage, bathing and so on.

Enough of all this detailed [refutation of the objection.] For, [the Lord] said:

The goal of the Yoginītantra[s] is Great Bliss, namely the Innate [Joy]. One should make an effort and mark [the exemplary experience of the goal], after the Highest [Joy,] and before the Cessation [Joy].

One might ask how many Initiations are intended in Yogatantra[s] such as the *Guhyasamāja*, and in the Yoginītantra[s] *Hevajra* etc.? To this some have replied—

Three Initiations are mentioned in the *Guhyasamāja* because of the quote:

26 TibI dgos pa; or upayoga in stronger sense of 'union'?

It has been proclaimed in this tantra that Initiation has a threefold division. (GST 18.113ab)

and because of the [threefold] initiation of body, speech and mind.

Again three initiations are described by the Lords in the Glorious Samāja, divided into [that of] body, speech and mind. No Fourth is required indeed.

If [you ask] how one should understand [the verse]

The Fourth [is] that again thus. (GST 18.113f)?

They reply that this does not refer to the meaning of an initiation. What then? The tantra[’s meaning] is being extended. For it has been taught in [that same] tantra:

The first [limb] is Service Sādhana, the second Subsidiary Sādhana; Sādhana is the third, and Great Sādhana the fourth. (GST 18.136)

The meaning of this [section of the argument] is as follows. The Wisdom Knowledge [Initiation] is in fact the fourth [limb], Great Sādhana. That is what it means for it is by means of that [initiation] that one attains the state of being the Great Vajradhara. The mention now of that state means that that same Wisdom Knowledge [Initiation] is the fourth expressed by the word ‘Fourth’, [namely] the Great Sādhana. One might ask what the point is of referring to that [Great Sādhana] in [a discussion of] initiation. [Some] think it is to describe the use of the initiation with the conventional designation ‘Wisdom [Knowledge]’.²⁷

But other wise men explain otherwise. Because of the statement:

27 Or upayoga in stronger sense of union, i.e.: ‘to describe the union in the initiation with [that which, i.e. she who has] the conventional designation “wisdom.”’ But cf. Tibl shes rab dang ’brel pa’i ‘without the consort (prajñā)’.

The first is the Vase Initiation; the second is called Secret; Wisdom Knowledge is the third. (GST 18.113c-e)

there would be the unwanted consequence that the Initiation of garland, water, crown etc., does not exist, [although] well established in other tantras, because the general[ly accepted prescription] is overruled by mention of the particular. That is why the Lord said²⁸ – The extra initiation other than the third, well established in other tantras, that is the fourth.²⁹ Therefore one should understand [the preliminary initiation] in the same way with regard to this [*Guhyasamāja*] tantra as in other tantras. The sense is that because there is no difference [in the way the initiations of garland, water etc. are performed] it is not explained here again.

Others again consider the Fourth to be indeed a real and distinct initiation. For, it is argued, just as the non-dual Great Bliss [is] experienced at the time of the Wisdom Knowledge [Initiation], ‘likewise’ it is explained verbally by the teacher as being in the relationship of marking and that which is to be marked, according to the instructions, [and thus, through that explanation,] becomes something one is certain about. That is the Fourth Initiation. Thus they consider there to be a two-fold initiation of the mind, [one] of certainty and [one] of uncertainty.³⁰ For it has been taught:

[First the teacher] should give the [three] initiations according to the taught rituals [and then] he should ascertain with his mind[’s eye the extent of] the student’s faith and conviction. [Then] he should give verbally the jewel of Initiations to [the student who

28 And this is not a quote but our author’s periphrasis of the intended sense of the scriptural ‘caturthaṃ tat punas tathā’.

29 The mention of wise men might lead one to attribute this position to our author, but it is questionable whether he would make this move of saying that the fourth is in fact the antecedent preliminary initiation group.

30 Cf. discussion above p.212.

has] faith and conviction in the deep and broad [Mantra] Way.
(*Samputodbhavantra* 2.1.62= *Prajñopāyavinīscayasiddhi* 3.38)

[One might object that] if this is so then the oral explanation given of the Vase and Secret [Initiations] would [also] be another initiation. Not so, for those two have been determined beforehand [and therefore] they are not divided into a determined and undetermined form. [Also not so] because there is no mention in the tantra of another further initiation, and no such tradition. This [is how some] consider [the Fourth to be a separate initiation.]

Now some teachers consider there to be only three initiations in the Yoginītantras such as the *Hevajra*. They say that the inclusion of that [notional fourth] is the further initiation of garland, water etc. laid down in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and other [texts] as that other than the third [referred to] in [the *Guhyasamāja* verse]:

The Fourth [is] that again thus. (GST 18.113f)

With faith and conviction they link the four-fold initiation mentioned in the [first] ‘Vajra Family’ chapter [of the *Hevajratantra*] to the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation. The Teacher Initiation is the love, smiling etc. [experienced in union] with the consort, because they are characteristics of the teacher’s activity since they have the form of worship of all the Tathāgatas and [their consorts and] so on. And the Secret Initiation is the loving viewing of the consort’s lotus [vagina] because the object of that [viewing] is the secret [sexual organs]. And the Wisdom [Knowledge] Initiation is the deep embrace of the consort’s body because [its] object is the wisdom [consort]. And the Fourth is the non-dual experience of the two [in union] which gets the highest Truth into its sights [and] which arises from their sexual union. That is what [some] assert. For it has been taught:

The Teacher [Initiation] is symbolised by smiling; likewise the Secret [Initiation] is in the viewing. And the Wisdom [Knowl-

edge Initiation] is in the taking of [her] hand, [and the Fourth] 'that again' ³¹ is in the union of the two. (HT II.iii.11)

Others [also] consider the Fourth to be indeed a [real and] distinct initiation, because all four are mentioned in the first chapter of the *Hevajra* [tantra]. For [it is a hermeneutical principle that] where the primary [meaning] does not prevail one cannot have faith. Therefore, because the initiation of the mind has two parts, one must find the Fourth Initiation here.

For it is argued that when one is in union with the body of the Wisdom [consort] [and] the semen is at the tip of the glans [of the penis] one experiences Great Bliss born together with that semen. It is the 'example Innate [Bliss]', ³² in the form of an example of the ultimately real Innate [Bliss]. Though it has no locus its activity seems to be limited in space, because of the power of its [spatial] object, [the female's sexual organ, and] it blocks all activity of the senses. That [Great Bliss] must be stabilised³³ to the best of one's abilities, by instruction [and] practice, by retention with a *yantra* mechanism and so on, or by mastery over the breath [in the *nāḍis*].

One must mark [that Great Bliss, once it has been stabilised]. This stabilised [Great Bliss] should be made to pervade every limb and subordinate limb. And once this [Great Bliss] does pervade every limb and subordinate limb, gradually [and] with practice [it] should be made to pervade every thing, that moves or is rooted. With concentrated mind, one should make this same [world] consist of just that [Great Bliss]. And once everything does consist of just that, by means of that same Innate Great Bliss which prevents everything from appearing in any other form than

³¹ Due to the pervasive awareness of the *Guhyasamāja* verse the Fourth is even called the 'caturthatatpunastathābhiṣeka' in, for instance, Kelikuliśa's commentary on the *Hevajra*.

³² 'Innate' not translated in Tibl.

³³ I.e. the semen retained at the tip of the penis.

itself, with the teacher’s instructions, it must be worshipped³⁴ again and again. This is the [correct] doctrine.

Of that [process] the marking of the Innate Great Bliss which one has stabilised, while in union with the consort’s body, is called the Wisdom Knowledge Initiation of the mind, because it has as its locus the Wisdom [consort’s] body. And again, the pervading of limbs and subordinate limbs with the Innate Great Bliss one has stabilised, as far as one is able [and] with concentrated mind, and the pervasion of the universe, and the making the universe consist of just that [Great Bliss] is like the Wisdom Knowledge [Initiation], shining forth as Great Bliss alone, non-dual [and] non-verbal. Therefore it should be recognised as the Initiation of the mind referred to by this line:

The Fourth [is] that again thus. (GST 18.113f)

That is the [alternative] argument [for a separate Fourth initiation.]

Now, what kind of thing this yoga of Innate Great Bliss is, and what kind of pledge[s] it has, and how it should be cultivated—all this has been clearly taught by my teacher³⁵ in the Sahajasādhana extracted from the *Hevajra*. Therefore I will not discuss it here. And once the teacher has concluded that the student [has attained] such a state at the time of his Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, concentrated, he should explain Reality with recitation of the verses beginning:

This experience is very subtle. (HT II.xii.4a)³⁶

This is the tradition.

34 But cf. alternative reading abhyarthana, and TibI bstan par bya: proclaimed, described (*prakāśita/*saṃvarṇita).

35 Cf. TibI: No sphuṭam, and more remarkably ‘taught by me’ instead of asmadgurubhiḥ, because this translation, or more probably an earlier stage of the transmission, attributes the present text to Ratnākaraśānti himself, which in turn explains the literally false modesty of omitting the ‘clearly’ [taught].

36 Cf. SNELLGROVE HT transl.: ‘This knowledge is the great bliss’, clearly translating sukha instead of sūkṣma.

[I] have here described the three posited types of Wisdom Knowledge Initiation, [according to] what should be marked and the marking. It is up to scholars to select the correct [position].

This arrangement of initiation is clear in the *Guhyasamāja* at least. [That arrangement] should be followed in other tantras according to the reality of the consort.

And in the *Guhyasamāja* and *Hevajra*, [different] positions have been taught with regard to the Fourth initiation. Here, as there, the wise should choose [which is] correct.

All [I] have said should be understood [to apply also] to the Yoga and Yoginī tantra [classes], in accordance with [what has been said in this text about] the two [paradigmatic] tantras with their respective *samayas*.

But I have not written about [and] refuted the positions with regard to the Fourth [initiation] which are beyond the pale of reason and scripture, for fear of being too prolix.

In whatever [textual] passage a wise man should find those [incorrect positions], there [on the spot] he should make a refutation that is endowed with reason and scripture.

May this whole world [of beings] be 'protected by the glory of the excellent victory'³⁷ of the Conquerors thanks to whatever merit the expounder of this truth about the Highest Initiation³⁸ has won.

'The Explanation of Initiation' is complete.

This is the work of the scholar Sujayaśrīgupta.

37 This phrase is a signature device (aṅka) because it includes the author's name, Sujayaśrīgupta, literally: 'Protected by the glory of an excellent victory'.

38 In fact the last two 'higher' initiations, which are here one inasmuch as both are initiations of the mind.

Abhiṣekanirukti

A Note on the Text

I am enormously grateful to Harunaga ISAACSON of the Abteilung für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens und Tibets, Asien-Afrika-Institut, University of Hamburg, for providing me with his transcript of the *Abhiṣekanirukti*, from the Royal Asiatic Society MS Hodgson 35. The below edition should be regarded as his, but, importantly, it is by no means final.

Since the time when this draft edition was prepared, Harunaga ISAACSON has acquired seven further folios, all kept in Kathmandu, which possibly all belonged originally to a single codex. They are now distributed as follows: three folios together with MS NAK 3-360/vi. bauddhatantra 84 ('Sarvavajrodayā') = NGMPP A 48/7; three folios together with NAK 1-1697 11/6 ('Mahā-pīṭhayoginītantrarāja') = NGMPP A 1306/31; and a single one (the opening folio) with NAK 4-20 ('Catuṣpīṭhanibandha') = NGMPP B 30/3. As he says, quite probably there may be a few more folios somewhere in the National Archives, Kathmandu.

Only the first group of these text fragments has been collated here. It is referred to in the critical apparatus as Nep. MS, in contradistinction to the RAS MS, which is so-called only where readings of the Nep. MS are also attested. The two other text fragments have not been collated here.

Hence the edition herewith of the *Abhiṣekanirukti* should be understood to be: i. provisional; and ii. the intellectual property of Harunaga ISAACSON, who should be personally consulted before any quotation from it, or information derived from it, may be published.

Abhiṣekanirukti

Royal Asiatic Society MS Hodgson 35.

[f4or3]

kāyadvayāśrayaṃ vyāpi dharmakāyaṃ mahāsukham|
 nityaṃ vajradharaṃ natvābhiṣekārtho nirucyate||1||
 vṛttyudārasukhaṃ sādhyam idānīntanam eva ca|
 manyante tan na yuktaṃ tu sekānantaramuktitaḥ||2||
 vṛttyudāraṃ parādhīnaṃ kathaṃ svarasato¹ bhavet|
 sāpāyaṃ ca kathaṃ sādhyam yuktaṃ muktivināśataḥ||3||
 tasmād anāsravaṃ sādhyam anapāyam anuttaram|
 sukham ākāśasaṃkāśaṃ jagadarthakriyākṣamam||4||
 sa eva tāyināṃ kāyo dharmakāya itī smṛtaḥ|
 tadāśrayau punaḥ kāyau bhoganirmāṇalakṣaṇau||5||
 sādhyau tāv api vīraṇāṃ mahāyāne niruttare|
 svaparāthaprasiddhyartham anyathā tadayogataḥ||6||
 sādhyo bhāvanayā tatra kāyaḥ pāramitānaye|
 prakāśaikaṛaso² 'cintyo dharmākhyo 'sau mahāmuneḥ||7||
 prajñāpāramitāmārgabhāvanābalataḥ sphuṭam|
 labhyate tatpradhānaṃ ca dvayaṃ dānādikarmataḥ||8||
 iha kāyatrayaṃ sādhyam evaṃ pāramitākramaiḥ|
 dānaśīlakṣamāvīryadhyānaprajñādināmakaiḥ||9||
 yogatantreṣu tat sādhyam devatākāramudrayā|
 nāyakair māṇḍaleyaś ca spharaṇāharaṇair api||10||
 kvacin mahāsukhācintyabhāvanābalataḥ punaḥ|
 sādhyo dvayāśrayaḥ kāyaḥ sahaajākhyāḥ samāsataḥ||11||
 sarveṣāṃ eva dharmāṇāṃ tattvād udbhavabhāvanaiḥ|
 kāyakarmādibhiś cāpi tanmayatvena kalpitaiḥ||12||
 dvitīyākārasaṃkhyātaiḥ puṇyasambhārahetubhiḥ|
 sahaajākhye mahāyoge sādhyam kāyadvayaṃ tathā||13||
 tasmāt sarveṣu tantreṣu saṃketena ca mudrayā|
 sārūpyeṇāpi³ saṃlakṣyo dharmakāyo 'bhiṣekataḥ||14||

1 Cf. TibI rang dbang grub pa, *svavaśato.

2 prakāśaikaṛaso] em.: MS prakāśyaikaṛaso

3 Cf. TibI adds ngo bo nyid kyis.

prādhānyāt tu sa evaiko lakṣya ity apare viduḥ|
 sasādhanaḥ sa evātra lakṣya iti apare sthitāḥ||15||
 saṃvibhajyātra saṃlakṣyās trayāḥ kāyās tu mudrayā|
 iti prajñābhiṣeke⁴ 'nye pravādanti manīṣiṇaḥ||16||

tatra prathamapakṣe⁵ 'yam abhiprāyaḥ— mahāsukhamayam acintyaṃ saṃbhoganirmāṇakāyāśrayabhūtaṃ cintāmaṇir ivāśeṣa-jagadarthakriyākāri kṣiṇasarvasāṃkleśikavāsanābijam suvīśuddhasarvabuddhaguṇa[f4ov]vāsanānilayam⁶ ālayaparāvṛttilakṣaṇaṃ pradhānaṃ dharmakāyākhyam phalaṃ suvīśuddhadharmadhāturūpaṃ yogatantreṣu bhāvanāsādhyaṃ na cājñātaṃ bhāvayitum śakyam|

na ca samprati tadāmbanajñānam asti, tatprāptau bhāvanāyā vaiyarthya-prasaṅgāt| na ca lokottaramārgādhīnasya tadasammukhībhave bhāvo yuktaḥ|

tasmāt tadbhāvanayā⁷ sarvatathāgatādhiṣṭhitamudrālakṣaṇayā-vikalpamahāsukhamātrapratibhāsatayā tattvasādṛśyāt tad evedam iti uttarakālaṃ tattvādhimokṣabalāc ca tantroktalakṣaṇamudrāsaṃyoge gurūpadeśato bodhicittamaṇimadhyasthitibahirnirgama-yor antarāle yad upalabhyate sarvānyopalambhapratyanīkabhūta-m advayābhāsaṃ mahāsukhākāraṃ jñānaṃ tad dṛṣṭāntabhūtaṃ draṣṭavyam|

tadvedane ca sārūpyāt tadadhyavasāyato dārṣṭāntikam api paramārthajñānaṃ dṛṣṭāntenānena sūpalakṣitaṃ mumukṣūṇāṃ⁸ paramārthajñānābhilāṣiṇāṃ bhavati| tasmimś ca paramārthajñāne

4 Cf. TibI shes rab yes shes dbang bskur.

5 prathamapakṣe] MS^{pc}: MS^{ac} prathame.

6 °guṇavāsanānilayam] MS: cf. TibI adds sa bon, i.e. *°guṇavāsanābijanilayam.

7 tasmāt tadbhāvanayā] conj.: MS tasmād udbhāvanayā.

8 sūpalakṣitaṃ mumukṣūṇāṃ] em.: MS sūpalakṣita(°lakṣitaṃ MS^{ac})+mumukṣūṇā+m.

gurūpadeśato niścita utpattyutpannakramadevatāyoge sahayo-
ge khadhātubhāvanāyāṃ ca tad eva lakṣitaṃ paramatattvaṃ sā-
daranirantaraṃ samayasahitaṃ bhāvyate|

tadbhāvanāpariniṣpattaṃ ca devatādyākārabhāvanābalāt sama-
yamāhātmyāc ca sukhataṃ āśutaraṃ ca kāyatrayaṃ labhyata
iti prajñājñānābhiṣekakāle prādhānyād dharmakāya evaikaḥ kā-
yadvayāśrayo lakṣyata iti prathamapakṣavādinō manyante||

dvitīyapakṣe punar ayam abhiprāyaḥ— yady api mahāsukham
anāsravaṃ anapāyi sādhyam tathāpi na tat sādhanam antareṇa śa-
kyasādhanam| atas tadvat tatsādhanam api jñeyam| tac ca tasya sā-
dhanam laukikalokottarasambhāradarśanabhāvanāmārgasvabhā-
vaṃ yathāsamayaṃ⁹ sarvatathāgatāir devatādyākāramudritaṃ jñ-
ānam yogatantre| tad api prajñājñānābhiṣeke tattvalakṣaṇajñāno-
tpattinimittatayārambhataḥ¹⁰ prabhṛti yathotpatti saṃlakṣaṇīya-
m iti|

tatra śrīsamājādaḥ tāvat saṃkṣepeṇa tantroktalakṣaṇāyāḥ sā-
dhakapriyāyā¹¹ mudrāyā yad rūpadarśanaṃ¹² kaṭhinastanādīspa-
rśanaṃ sāmūhagarutākaraṇam adhararasāsvādanaṃ gātragatamṛ-
ganābhigandhāghrāṇam teṣāṃ ca māyopamatayā saṃkalanaṃ ta-
tsahajā ca¹³ prītis tad vairocanaḥ tathāgatarūpavajrādivajrādhīpa-
tisvabhāvaṃ sambhāramārgasaṃgrhītam ārambhata eva lakṣaṇī-
yam|

yat tasyā eva mudrāyā gāḍhāsleṣeṇa svīkaraṇam yac ca kucā-
dikāṭhinyam pṛthivīsvabhāvaṃ sparśajñānālambanabhūtaṃ, sva-
pratibhāsamātratayā bahirarthānupalambho 'nyatra cāpracāraḥ
cetasas tathāvidhajñānasaha[f41r]jā ca yā prītiḥ sa bhagavān vairo-

9 Cf. TibI mngon par rtogs pa ji lta ba zhin du, *yathābhisamayaṃ.

10 °nimitta° MS: cf. TibI rgyu.

11 °priyāyā] em.: MS °priyasyā.

12 Cf. TibI adds la sogs pa, *rūpādi°.

13 ca] MS^{pc}: MS^{ac} om.

cano locanā¹⁴ moho bhogavyavasthāyām¹⁵ moharatir mohavajraś
copāvyavasthāyām ca sevālakṣaṇam prathamam aṅgam nirve-
dhabhāgīyasamgrhītam tad anantaram lakṣaṇīyam| tad uktam—

sādhyasādhanasamyogam yat tat sevati bhāṇyate|| (GST 18.176a-
b)

atrottaratra ca vyāpāre vairocanādīnām sarvatathāgatasamgraha-
bhūtānām mohavajrādīnām ca bodhisattvānām buddhalocanādī-
nām ca devīnām moharatyādīnām ca devīnām vijñābhyām guru-
śiṣyābhyām yathopadeśataḥ spharaṇasamharaṇādīkam kāryam¹⁶
iti|

tatas tasyā eva dharmadhātumudrāyāḥ kamalasya kāyavākcitta-
śūnyatayā tryasrasyāntaḥśuśirasya coparyupari bhūmiviśuddhita-
yopariviśālasyalambanabhūtasuviśuddhadharma dhātusvabhāva-
syābhedyasamyagjñānasvabhāvatayā ghananibīḍadaṇḍāyamānenā-
kāśasamaśūnyatāvalambanatayordhvamukhena vajreṇa yad adva-
yīkaraṇam adṛṣṭasya dharmadhātor darśanam anāsravadarśana-
mārgasvabhāvam sarvatragadharma dhātuprativedhalakṣaṇam ta-
n mudrayā jñeyam|

tatra ca yad vajrapadmayor advayīkaraṇajñānam yac ca taylor
bhede viyogātmake vaimukhyam yā ca tadāmbanabhūtābdhā-
tusvabhāvā klinnatā yā ca tatsahajā prītiḥ sa bhagavān akṣobhyo
dveṣo māmakī bhogavyavasthāyām dveṣaratir dveṣavajraś ca u-
pāvyavasthāyām¹⁷ dvitīyam aṅgam upasādhanam anantaram
lakṣaṇīyam| tad uktam—

vajrapadmasamāyogam upasādhanam iṣyate| (GST 18.176cd)

tasyā eva dharmadhātumudrāyā vipulakamalasya dharmadhātu-
rūpasyāntaḥpraveśaniḥkāśavatā vajreṇa samyagjñānasvabhāvena

14 Omitted in Tibl.

15 °vyavasthāyām] em.: MS °vyavasthāyā.

16 kāryam] MS^{ac}: MS^{pc} kāyam.

17 °vyavasthāyām] MS^{pc}: MS^{ac} °vyavasthām.

punaḥ punar ekāntāsaktena sarvākāraṃ yat pratyavekṣaṇam bahulīkaraṇalakṣaṇam anāsravabhāvanāmārgasvabhāvaṃ tan mudrayā veditavyam|

tatra ca yat padmāntargharṣaṇasaktijñānaṃ yā ca tadālambanabhūtā gharṣaṇavaśād uṣṇatā tejodhātusvabhāvā yā ca tatsahajā prītiḥ sa bhagavān amitābho rāgaḥ pāṇḍarā bhogavyavasthāyāṃ rāgaratī rāgavajraś ca upāyavyavasthāyāṃ sādhanākhyāṃ tṛtīyam aṅgam anantaraṃ lakṣaṇīyam| tad uktam—

sādhanaṃ cālanam proktaṃ hūṃphaṭkārasamanvitam| (GST 18.177ab)

iti|| tasyām eva cāvasthāyāṃ sarvatathāgatatatprajñāsvabhāvayoḥ prajñopāyayor atyantāsaktijanitābhiyojyābhiyoktṛtvābhimānena sadṛśasuratasukhasaṃvedanena yā cittonnatir harṣaś ca sa bhagavān ratnasambhavo māno mado viśeṣamārgasaṃgrhīto mudrayā veditavyaḥ| sa ca caitasikatvena rāgasāmānyena ca rāgavajra evāntarbhāvanīya iti [f41v] nāsau pṛthak sādhanāṅgam iti|

tad anu ca prajñopāyayor advayapratibhāsayor atyantabhāvanayodbhūtaparamānandayoḥ samarasībhūtamohadveṣarāgapracārayor viśuddhadharmadhātvalambanaṃ paramasuratavyāpārājñānaṃ sādhyābhimukhakarmalakṣaṇaṃ yat niṣṭhāmārgasaṃgrhītaṃ¹⁸ tan mudrayā veditavyam|

tatra ca yo vajramaṇināḍyāṃ bodhicittasya mahāsukhasahajasya prerako vāyudhātuś cāadbodhicittasparśālambanam ca yaj jñānaṃ sakalasurataśāstravihitavyāpārāṇām apravartakaṃ samyagjñānātmano vajrasyaiva sādhyābhimukhe karmaṇi pratītya prerakam anantaram eva phalābhinirvartakam| yac ca rāgadveṣamohādīnāṃ samarasaṃ svarūpavedanam antaḥsparśānubhavalakṣaṇaṃ paramānandasvabhāvaṃ yā ca tatsahajā prītiḥ sa yathāyogaṃ bhagavān amoghasiddhir īrṣyā¹⁹ kāmaḥ samayatārā bhogavyava-

18 niṣṭhāmārgasaṃgrhītaṃ] conj., with Tib.: MS tanniṣṭhāmārgasaṃgrhītaṃ.

19 īrṣyā] em.: MS iṣyā.

sthāyāṃ samayavajro vajraratīś ca upāyavyavasthāyāṃ śamitarā-
gadveṣāmohapracāratayātibahalatarasukhayogitayā phalāvyabhi-
cāritayā ca mahāsādhanaḥkhyāṃ caturtham aṅgaṃ tad anantaram
lakṣaṇīyam| tad uktam—

svabhāvaṃ svasukhaṃ śāntaṃ mahāsādhanaṃ ucyate|| (GST
18.177cd)

iti| etasyāṃ eva prajñābhiṣekakāle caturbhogavyavasthāyāṃ sa-
māhitena manasā mohadveṣarāgādīnāṃ samudācaradvṛttīnāṃ e-
karasībhūtānāṃ ca tadvāsanālakṣaṇānāṃ yathāyogam antarānta-
rā tadviśuddhilakṣaṇaṃ²⁰ tatksayajñānaṃ sakalakleśajñeyādyā-
varaṇakṣayalakṣaṇaṃ tattanmudrayā²¹ yamāntakaprajñāntakapa-
dmāntakavighnāntakarūpam iha lakṣaṇīyam|

tatra mohakṣayajñānaṃ yamāntakaḥ| dveṣakṣayajñānaṃ pra-
jñāntakaḥ| rāgakṣayajñānaṃ padmāntakaḥ| sarvāvaraṇakṣayajñā-
naṃ vighnāntako dharmakāyaphalaprāptivighnanivāraṇāt| tad
uktam—

mohaṃ²² mohopabhogena kṣayamoho²³ yamāntakṛt| (GST 18.58a-
b)

ity ārabhya yāvat

sarvāvaraṇakṣayajñānaṃ vighnāntakṛd iti smṛtam| (GST 18.61cd)

iti|| tad evaṃ²⁴ mohadveṣarāgādīnāṃ²⁵ tadvāsanānāṃ ca pra-
tipakṣabhūtānāṃ sambhāradarśanabhāvanāmārgasaṃgrhītānāṃ
adhimukticyāśuddhyādhyāśayikavaipākikasarvāvaraṇavarjitabhū-
migatānāṃ suviśuddhadharmadhātujñānaprāptinimittānāṃ śrī-
samājādaḥ sevopasādhanaśādhanaṃ mahāsādhanaḥ lakṣaṇānāṃ²⁶ pra-

20 tadviśuddhi°] em.: MS tadviśuddha°; cf. Tib I de dag rnam par dag pa'i.

21 tattanmudrayā] em., with TibI. de dang de'i phyag rgya: MS tantramudra-
yā. TibII. has translated as tantroktamudrayā, as though interpreting original
tantramudrayā.

22 Cf. moho, MATSUNAGA's edition.

23 kṣayamoho=mohakṣaya.

24 tad evaṃ] em.: MS tad eva.

25 moha°] MS^{pc}; MS^{ac} om.

26 sevopasādhana°] em.: MS sa copasādhana°.

jñābhiṣeke yathāyogaṃ parirambhaprativedhavicāraṇājñānoda-
yamudrayā sarvatathāgatair mudritānāṃ mahāsukhaikarasasya ma-
hāvajradharasya dṛṣṭāntabhūtasya dārṣṭāntikasya ca saṃlakṣaṇa-
prāptinimittabhūtanāṃ²⁷ taddhetutayā caturṇāṃ sādhanānāṃ
saṃlakṣaṇam iha veditavyam|

tad anu kleśajñeyāvaraṇaviśuddhaḥ sarva[f42r] karma viśuddhya-
ti| viśuddhatvāc²⁸ ca karmaṇo viśuddhaṃ phalam avāpyate| tad
uktam—

kleśavajrāvṛte śuddhe sarvaṃ karma viśuddhyati²⁹|
sarvakarmaviśuddhatvād³⁰ viśuddhaṃ karmajaṃ phalam|| (GST
18.62)

iti| ato dharmakāyalakṣaṇaṃ sādhyam nirāvaraṇam anāsravam a-
napāyaṃ mahāsukham advayaṃ suviśuddhadharmadhātutajjñā-
narūpam ādarśasamatāpratyavekṣaṇājñānātmakasambhogakāyā-
śrayaṃ kṛtyānuṣṭhānājñānātmakanirmāṇakāyaprabhavaṃ sarva-
buddhānāṃ upeyam iti tatsādhanam iha mantranaye dṛṣṭānta-
mudrayā lakṣaṇīyam|

ataḥ sādhanalakṣaṇānantaraṃ mudrāvarāṅgasāṅge vajramaṇi-
śikharagataṃ bodhicittam upadeśena padmavaraṭake vajrama-
ṇipīḍanād vāyuvijayābhyāsāt phaṭkāradimantreṇa³¹ vā saṃdhā-
rya yathāśakti tatsahajam avicchinnaṃ akalpaṃ pratyastamitasar-
vendriyavṛtti mahāsukhamātrapratibhāsaṃ suviśuddhadharma-
dhātutajjñānarūpadharmakāyasamupalakṣakam advayājālpasukha-
mātrapratibhāsatayā sarvatathāgatair ekavākyena tathā samitatvā-
d³² upeyamahāvajradharadṛṣṭāntabhūtaṃ dṛṣṭāntadārṣṭāntikayor

27 saṃlakṣaṇaprāpti°] em.: MS saṃlakṣaṇaṃ saṃprāpti°.

28 viśuddhatvāc] em., with TibI rnam par dag pas: MS viśuddhyatvāc. Cf.
same emendation in GST verse below, following GST ed.

29 viśuddhyati] MS: GST ed. viśuddhyate.

30 °viśuddhatvād] em., with GST ed.: MS °viśuddhyatvād.

31 phaṭkāra°] em.: MS phatkārā°.

32 Cf. TibI brdar btags, *sanketatvād.

abhedādhimokṣeṇa tattvarūpeṇa tad evedam iti samāhitena cetasā tatra samyak saṃlakṣaṇīyaṃ saṃlakṣya sthīrīkṛtya yathābhisamayaṃ devatākārayoge yathāsamayaṃ hṛccandrahūṃkāradike sahayayoge khavajrabhāvanāyāṃ ca sādaranirantaradīrghakālaṃ samayācāraṃ yathopadeśato bhāvanīyaṃ| tathāśutaraṃ sukhatarāṃ ca tad bhāvyamānaṃ prāpyata iti dvitīyapakṣavādinō manyante|| ||

ṛtīyapakṣe tv ayam abhiprāyaḥ— sasādhanaṃ asādhanaṃ vā na dharmakāyamātraṃ lakṣyaṃ, tāvanmātrasya mahāyāne 'sādhya-tvāt, tāvanmātreṇa parārthāyogāt|

kiṃ tarhi— aparaṃ api kāyadvayaṃ jñānacatuṣṭayasamgrhītaṃ sādhyam|

tathā hi pāramitānaye dharmadhātuvīśuddhis³³ tadantarbhūtaṃ ca dharmadhātujñānaṃ dharmakāyākhyam pradhānaṃ sādhyam| tadāśrayaṃ ca sarvākārasarvārthāpratibimbavarūpam ādarśajñānam| sarvabuddhasamatāvabodhanaṃ samatājñānam| sarvākārādhigatasya ca sarvārthasya tathāiva paricchedakaṃ pratyavekṣaṇājñānam| etajñānatrayasvabhāvaṃ sambhogakāyākhyam phalam aparaṃ| tathā sarvākārasarvajagadarthakriyākaraṇalakṣaṇaṃ kṛtyānuṣṭhānajñānaṃ nirmāṇakāyākhyam phalam|

tathā³⁴ mantranaye 'pi yathāsamayaṃ yathātantraṃ suvīśuddhadharmadhāturūpavajradharasvabhāvaṃ suvīśuddhatajjñānarūpākṣobhyātmakaṃ ca dharmakāyākhyam pradhānaṃ sādhyam| tathā sarvākāraviśvapratibhāsādarśajñānasvabhāvavairocana-svabhāvaṃ sarvabuddhasamatāvabodhanarūpasamatājñānasvabhāvaratnasambhavasvabhāvaṃ³⁵ anubhūtasarvākārasarvārthaparicchedātmakapratyavekṣaṇājñānasvabhāvāmitābhasvabhāvaṃ ca sambhogakāyākhyam dvitīyaṃ dharmakāyāśritaṃ phalam| tathā vi-

33 °vīśuddhis] MS^{pc}; MS^{ac} °vīśus.

34 tathā] em., with TibI. de bzhi du: MS tatas.

35 °rūpasamatājñānasvabhāvaratnasambhava° em.: MS °rūparatnasambhava°.

śvavyāpi jagadarthakriyākaraṇalakṣaṇakṛtyānuṣṭhānājñānasvabhā-
vāmoghasiddhisvabhāvaṃ nirmāṇakāyākhyam aparam iha pha-
laṃ sādhyam| evam iha kāyatrayam eva sādhyam|

yad eva sādhyam tad eva ca sarvatathāgatasamitābhir mudrā-
bhir yathāsaṃketam lakṣaṇīyam iti| ataḥ prajñābhiṣekakāle vajra-
maṇiśikharam ārohati bodhicitte tatraiva deśe yathopadeśato dvi-
tīyapakṣoktena nyāyena sthīrīkṛte bodhicitte tatsahajabhūtam yat
svaparapratibhāsabhedarahitam paramamahāsukhamātram adva-
yam pratyastamitasarvavyāpāram vāgvikalpātīkrāntarūpaṃ sva-
saṃvedanaikaniṣṭhaṃ mānasam ākāśasaṃkāśam³⁶ vedanam anu-
bhūyate| tad dharmakāyasya lakṣaṇam| tad uktam—

yāvan na kurute yogi³⁷ bodhicittavisarjanam|
tāvat prāpnoty avicchinnaṃ kim apy ānandajaṃ sukham||
(Guhyasiddhi 8.36cd–37ab)

yat tu vajrāntaścaladbodhicittasparśasamudbhūtam adeśastham
api pratiniyatadeśam ivāmbanavaśād bahirmukhaṃ sukhākā-
raṃ bodhicittasambhogajñānam saṃvedyate tat sambhogakāya-
sya lakṣaṇam| yat tu prajñākamalodaraspharitasya tadbodhici-
ttasambhogena vihitatatparitoṣasya vajramaṇinā saṃvedanam ni-
rmanākāyasya lakṣaṇam|

tad evaṃ kāyatrayam yathābhisamayam³⁸ mudrayābhilakṣya
sthīrīkṛtya ca yathopadeśam yathābhisamayam devatākāramudra-
yā mantrākāramudrayā mauleṇa sahajayogena taduttarabhuvā-
dvitīyena cākāreṇa samayasahitam bhāvayataḥ sukhatarām āśuta-
raṃ ca kāyatrayapratilambho³⁹ bhavatīti tṛtīyapakṣavādinō ma-
nyante|| ||

yoginītantre⁴⁰ tu hevajrādaḥ kāyatrayam eva sādhyam| tad eva
prajñābhiṣekakāle lakṣayitum nyāyyam| prādhānyāt tu mahāsu-

36 ākāśasaṃkāśam] conj.: MS ākāśam mānasam.

37 yogi] MS, and TibI and *Guhyasiddhi* ed. Tib: *Guhyasiddhi* ed. Skt. mantri.

38 But cf. TibI brda ji lta bu bzhin du, *yathāsamayam.

39 kāyatraya°] MS^{pc}: MS^{ac} kāyatra°

40 °tantre] MS^{pc}: MS^{ac} °tantreṣu

khākāraṃ saharupam dharmakāyamātram lakṣaṇīyam ity eke||
tad eva vicitrādisādhanasahitam sasādhanam lakṣaṇīyam ity apa-
re||

yathāsamayaṃ sarvatathāgatasamitamudrātattvānusāreṇa kā-
yadvayam eva vā dharmasambhogākhyam lakṣaṇīyam ity apare|
tathā hi yat tan nirākāram ākāśasaṃkāśam mahāsukhamātrapra-
bhāsam sātasaṃvedanam tad yoginīcakrarūpasya dharmakāyasya
saṃlakṣaṇam| yat tu kundendusaṃkāśasya tatsahajasya bodhici-
ttasya saṃvedanam tat sambhogakāyasya śrīherukarūpasya saṃ-
vedanam saṃlakṣyam⁴¹| tad uktam—

saṃvṛtaṃ kundasaṃkāśam vivṛtaṃ sukhārūpiṇam|
śukrākāro bhaved bhagavāṃs tatsukham kāminī smṛtam|| (HT
II.iv.30ab, I.viii.50ab)

[f43r]etac ca paramaviramayor madhye lakṣaṇīyam ity uktiyukti-
vido manyante| yad āha—

paramaviramayor madhye lakṣyam vikṣya dṛḍhīkuru|

iti|

viramādau lakṣayet tac cānandatrayavarjitaṃ| (HT I.x.18cd)

iti ca|

nanu na mahāsukham sādhyam asāntatvāt, sādhyatvenātraiva
hevajratantre dūṣitatvāc ca| yad uktam—

tasmāt saukhyam na tattvākhyam mahābhūtaṃ yataḥ sukham||
(HT I.x.40cd)

iti| pāramitānaye ca prajñāpāramitādāv advayamātrasyaiva sādhyat-
venokteḥ| na hi nayabhede 'pi tattvaṃ bhidyate 'tattvaprasaṅgāt|

41 [saṃlakṣyam] corr., with TibI. mtshon ba bya'o: MS missing.

nanūpāyabhede katham na phalabhedah| dṛṣṭo hi hetubhedāt
phalabhedah| tathā hi śālyañkurayavāñkurayoḥ| anyathājanaka-
tvāpattir iti|

tan na| vivartyasya vikāryasya vā phalasya hetubhedād bhedo
bhavati na tu prāpyasya| tasya prāptimātram upāyabhedād bhi-
dyate na svarūpam| iha tu mahāyāne prakāśaikarasam⁴² ākāśa-
saṃkāśam dharmakāyarūpam asaṃskṛtam sādhyam pradhānam
prāpyam iti na bhedah|

ata evāsādhyatvāt tasya na prajñājñānābhiṣekakāle tal lakṣaṇī-
yam| nāpi paramaviramayor madhye tal lakṣyam, idānīm sukhā-
kāśyātibahalatvāt, paramanirvṛteḥ praśamamātrarasāyāḥ⁴³ kṛ-
takṛtyatālakṣaṇāyās tadānīm asaṃvedanāc ca|

tasmād viramānte rāgavirāgakṣayāt kṛtakṛtyaḥ⁴⁴ saṃhṛtasaka-
lavikalpaḥ samayamudrāsaṃyuktaḥ kṛtakṛtyatālakṣaṇam parama-
nirvṛtiṃ praśamamātraikarasām⁴⁵ saṃlakṣayet| tad uktaṃ tantre—

viramānte vyavasthitam| (Guhyasiddhi 3.8b)

iti kecid ācāryāḥ|

tan na yuktam ity anye| tathā hi praśamaikarasam⁴⁶ mahāsu-
kham eva sarvatra mahāyāne sādhyam prakāśavat sukhasyāpy⁴⁷
anāvaraṇacittaprakṛtitvāt| tathā hi yad yasyābādhitam rūpam ta-
sya sā prakṛtiḥ| tadyathā prakāśalakṣaṇasya cittasya prakāśākāro
'bādhitam ca rūpam anāsravacittasya sukhākāra ity etāvanmātra-
nimittatvāt prakṛtitvavyavasthāyās tasmin sati yadi sa⁴⁸ na bhaved
anyatrāpi na syān nimittāviśeṣāt|

42 Cf. TibI rtog pa, *kalpanaikarasam.

43 Cf. Tib rab tu gsal shing, *prakāśa°.

44 kṛtakṛtyaḥ] em.: MS krtakṛtyam

45 praśama°] MS: cf. TibII *prakāśa°.

46 praśama°] MS: cf. TibII *prakāśa°.

47 sukhasya] MS: cf. TibII *mahāsukhasya.

48 saḥ] corr., to agree with sukhākāraḥ: MS sā.

nanv abādhitatvam asiddham, nīlākāravat⁴⁹ sukhākārasyāpy e-
kānekaviyogena bādhyamānatvāt| tathā hi yathāyaṃ nīlākāro de-
śavitānena prakāśate⁵⁰ tathā sukhākāro 'pi| yato grīṣmātapasaṃ-
taptasya yāvanty aṅgāny apsu⁵¹ majjanti, tāvatsv eva sukham u-
palabhyata iti|

tan na yuktaṃ| tatra hy antaḥsprāṣṭavyaviśeṣasya sparśajñānā-
lambanasya deśavitānena prakāśo⁵² na sukhasyānugrāhakākāra-
mātralakṣaṇatvāt| tatra caikānekavicārāyogāt| tasmāt prakāśākā-
ravat sukhākāro 'py anāsravasya cittasya prakṛtir iti na tasmin sati
tasyā[f43v]pāyāḥ|

na ca cittābhāva eva sādhyāś cittābhāvasyāpy asaṃvedanavi-
śayatvenāpramāṇatvāt parārthābhāvaprakṛter āgamabādhitatvā-
c ceti| na ca sukhākāra ity evāpraśamarūpatā| tatrānāsravasukhe
sarvakleśopakleśatadvāsanānām anuṣaṅgābhāvata iti|

na ca pāramitānaye 'pi praśamaikarasam sukhākārarahitaṃ dha-
rmakāyākyam sādhyam; kiṃ tu virāgavīṇyānāṃ yatra sukham
tatra rāgo 'nuśeta iti bhayam utpadyata iti bhagavatā sukhākā-
raṃ saṃgopya praśamaikarasam advayaṃ prakāśamātraṃ prajñ-
āpāramitālakṣaṇaṃ sādhyam darśitam| mantranaye tu mahārā-
gavīṇyāṃ lokam avalokyādvayaṃ prakāśamātraṃ praśamaika-
rasam ākāśasaṃkāśam aprakāśyaṃ paramamahāsukhākāram eva
sādhyam saṃprakāśitam iti na kaścid virodhaḥ|

kiṃ ca pāramitānaye 'py āstāṃ tāvad buddhabhūmau nirā-
varaṇāyāṃ atimahat praśamamahāsukham| bodhisattvabhūmāv
evāṣṭamyāṃ mahad idam ucyate⁵³ tad uktam—

praśāntam acalam śreṣṭham vaśavarti samāsamam|
nirvikalpasukham tasmād bodhisattvo 'dhigacchati|| (Avikalpa-
praveśadhāraṇī)

49 nīlākāravat] em.: MS nīlākāravat.

50 prakāśate] em.: MS prakhyate. Cf. TibI gya che tha dad par gyur pa.

51 TibII adds bsil ba'i, *śīta°.

52 prakāśo] MS: cf. TibII prakāśeṇa

53 ucyate] MS^{ac}: MS^{pc} uvacyate.

iti|

yad apy uktaṃ hevajra eva sukhasya sādhyatvaṃ dūṣitam iti tad apy ayuktam| na hi tatrānāsravasyākāśasaṃkāśasya⁵⁴ mahā-sukhasya sādhyatvaṃ nirākṛtam| kiṃ tarhi| dr̥ṣṭāntasukhasya sā-sravasya⁵⁵ sāpāyasya sādhyatvaśaṅkā kasyacit syād ity āśaṅkya tan nirākṛtam|

yad apy uktaṃ

viramānte vyavasthitam (Guhyasiddhi 3.8b, cited above)

iti pāṭhāt tatraiva kṛtakṛtyatā paramanirvṛtilakṣaṇā lakṣaṇīyā na mahāsukham iti tad apy ayuktaṃ viramānta iti tatraiva bahuvrī-hisamāśāt| yad api

sahajānandaṃ tu śeṣataḥ (HT I.viii.32d)

ity uktaṃ tad api śeṣataḥ pāriśeṣyāt trayāṇām anupayuktatvāt tad eva bhāvyam⁵⁶ iti boddhavyam|

kiṃ ca viramānte khasamaṃ praśamaikarasam advayaṃ nirjalpaṃ nirākāṅkṣaṃ rāgavirāgarahitaṃ lakṣaṇīyam iti matam| tac ca na sambhāvyate| yatas tasyām avasthāyām nādvayaṃ jñānaṃ vidyate| prajñopāyyor vicitraviṣayapratibhāsanāt| nāpi nirjalpa-m anubhūtānekārthavikalpanāt| nāpi rāgavirāgarahitaṃ anupa-citadhātor virāgasambhavād upacitadhātoḥ punā rāgasambhavāt| nāpi nirākāṅkṣaṃ tasyaiva punaḥ suratābhilāṣāt|

cakṣurādinimīlanena prayatnato vikalpaparihāreṇa ca bheda-pratibhāsāpagame mudropayogo niḥphalaḥ syāt| anyathaiva ta-tsiddheḥ|

na vinā prajñāravindasambhogaṃ paramanirvṛtirūpā kṛtakṛtyatā sampadyata iti cet| na, bhojanābhyaṅgasnānādibhir⁵⁷ api

54 anāsravasyākāśasaṃkāśasya] conj.: MS anāsravasyānākāśasaṃkāśasya.

55 sāsravasya] em.: MS sāvasrasya.

56 bhāvyam] conj., with TibI bsgom par bya ba: MS bhavyam.

57 bhojanābhyaṅgasnānādibhir] corr., with TibI no first ādī, and bsku mnye: MS bhojanādyāṅgasnānādibhir.

tādṛkkṛtakṛtyatotpatteḥ|

alam ativistareṇe[f44r]ti|⁵⁸ āha ca—

tat sādhyam yoginītantre saḥajākhyam mahāsukham|
paramānte bhavel lakṣyam viramādaḥ ca yatnataḥ||

iti| nanu śrīsamājādaḥ yogatantrē hevajrādaḥ ca yoginītantre ki-
yanto 'bhiṣekā abhipretāḥ| tatra kecid āhuḥ— śrīsamāje trayo 'bhi-
ṣekāḥ paṭhyante|

abhiṣekam tridhā bhinnam asmiṃs tantre prakāśitam| (GST
18.113ab)

iti vacanāt kāyavākcittābhiṣecanāc ceti|

kāyavākcittābhedenā śrīsamāje trayāḥ punaḥ|
sekāḥ saṃvarṇitā nāthaiś caturtho nāma neṣyate||

caturtham tat punas tathā (GST 18.113f)

iti katham nīyata iti cet— ucyate— nānenābhiṣekārtho⁵⁹ bhāṇyate|
kiṃ tarhi| tantrābhiṣyandanaṃ kriyate| tathā hy uktaṃ tantre—

sevāsādhanaṃ prathamam dvitīyam upasādhanaṃ|
sādhanaṃ tu tṛtīyam vai mahāsādhana caturthakam|| (GST 18.136)

iti| tatrāyam arthaḥ| yad etat prajñājñānaṃ tad eva caturtham
mahāsādhanaṃ ity arthaḥ| tenaiva mahāvajradharapadaprāpteḥ|
idānīm tatpadasya lakṣaṇatvāt tad eva prajñājñānaṃ caturtham
caturthaśabdavācyaṃ mahāsādhanaṃ ity arthaḥ|| abhiṣeke tada-
bhīdhānasya ka upayoga iti cet— prajñāsaṃketenābhiṣekopayoga-
varṇanam⁶⁰ iti manyante|

anye tu sudhiyo 'nyathā vyācakṣate|

⁵⁸ ativistareṇeti] em. MS: ativistareṇa ti.

⁵⁹ abhiṣekārtho] corr., with TibI dbang gi don: MS abhiṣekādyo.

⁶⁰ prajñāsaṃketena] MS: cf. TibI shes rab dang 'brel ba'i.

prathamam kalaśābhiṣekaṃ dvitīyaṃ guhyam ucyate|
prajñājnānaṃ tṛtīyaṃ (GST 18.113ce)

iti vacanāt anyatantraprasiddhasya mālodakamukuṭāder⁶¹ abhiṣe-
kasyābhāvaḥ prasajyate, viśeṣoktyā sāmānyabādhanāt| tadarthaṃ
bhagavān āha— tṛtīyād yad anyat tantrāntaraprasiddham abhiṣe-
kāntaraṃ tac caturtham| tad yathānyatantreṣu tathaivātra tantre
veditavyam| viśeṣābhāvāt punar atra noktam iti bhāvaḥ||

anye tu caturtham abhiṣekaṃ pṛthag eva manyante| tathā hi
yathaiva prajñājnānakāle mahāsukham advayam anubhūtaṃ ta-
thaiva tad eva lakṣyalakṣaṇabhāvena yathopadeśaṃ guruṇā va-
casā pratipādyamānaṃ niścayaviśayatāṃ gacchac, caturthābhiṣe-
ko bhavitīti cittasyaiva niścayāniścayarūpatayā dvividham abhi-
ṣekaṃ manyante| tad uktam—

dattvābhiṣekaṃ vidhibhir yathoktaiḥ śiṣyādhimuktiṃ manasā-
samīkṣya|
udāragambhīranayādhimukter vācaiva dadyād abhiṣekaratnam||
(Saṃpuṭodbhavatantra 2.1.62= Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi 3.38)

iti| yady evaṃ, kalaśaguhyayor api vacasā prātipādanaṃ yat tad
abhiṣekāntaraṃ syāt| na, tayoḥ prāg eva niścitatvāt, niścitāniści-
tarūpatvena bhedaābhāvāt, aparasya sekāntarasya tantre pāṭhābhā-
vāt, sampradāyābhāvac ceti manyante|

yoginītantre tu hevajrādaḥ kecid ācāryās trividham eva⁶² abhi-
ṣekaṃ manyante|

caturtham[f44v] tat punas tathā (again GST 18.113f)

iti tṛtīyād yad anyat tattvasaṃgrahādyabhihitam mālodakādika-
m abhiṣekāntaraṃ tasya saṃgraham⁶³ varṇayanti| vajrakulapaṭa-

61 mālodakamukuṭāder] Nep. MS, with TibI chu dang cod pan la sogs pa:
RAS MS mālodakāder.

62 trividham eva] corr.: MS tridhām eva.

63 saṃgraham] Nep. MS: RAS MS saṃgrhītaṃ.

le paṭhitam caturvidham abhiṣekaṃ⁶⁴ prajñājñānābhiṣeka evā-
dhimokṣato yojayanti| yat prajñayā saha premahasitādikaṃ sa-
rvatathāgatādipūjārūpam ācāryakarmalakṣaṇatvāt sa ācāryābhi-
ṣekaḥ| yac ca prajñāyāḥ sapremāravindavīkṣaṇam tad guhyāśra-
yatvād guhyābhiṣekaḥ| yā ca prajñāṅgāvāptiḥ sa prajñāśrayatvāt
prajñābhiṣekaḥ| yat punar dvayos tantraṇodbhavam⁶⁵ paramata-
ttvasamupalakṣakam advayajñānam tac caturtham iti manyante|
tad uktam—

hasitaśuddhyā tv ācārya⁶⁶ īkṣaṇe guhyakas tathā|
prajñā pāṇyāvāptau ca tat punar dvandvatantrake|| (HT II.iii.11)

iti|

anye caturtham pṛthag evābhiṣekaṃ manyante| prathamē pa-
ṭale hevajre sarveṣāṃ caturṇām eva pāṭhāt| kvacid api mukhyāsa-
mbhave⁶⁷ dhimokṣāyogāt⁶⁸ | tasmāc cittābhiṣekasyaiva dvidhā-
bhedāc caturthābhiṣeko 'tra draṣṭavyaḥ|

tathā hi prajñāṅgasaṅge sati manyagragate bodhicitte bodhi-
cittasahajaṃ mahāsukhaṃ sarvendriyavṛttibādhanaṃ adeśam a-
py ālambanavaśāt pratiniyatadeśavṛttīva pāramārthikasahajadr-
ṣṭāntarūpaṃ drṣṭāntasahajaṃ⁶⁹ yad anubhūyate tad upadeśato
'bhyāsād yantrākarṣaṇādīnā vājuvijayena vā yathāśakti sthīrīkṛtya
lakṣaṇīyam|

sthīrīkṛtasyāsyā sarvāṅgapratyaṅgavyāpanam sarvāṅgapratya-
ṅgavyāpinaś cāsyā krameṇābhyāsavaśāt sakalasthiracalabhāvavyā-
panam samāhitena cetasā tasyaiva tanmayīkaraṇam tanmayīkṛta-
sya ca viśvasya tadanyarūpapratibhāsavirodhinā tenaiva sahaja-

64 vajrakulapaṭale paṭhitam caturvidham abhiṣekaṃ] RAS MS: Nep. MS vajrakulapaṭhita etac caturthābhiṣekaṃ.

65 tantraṇodbhavam] em., with TibI gnyis ka'i bya ba las byung ba: RAS MS tantraṇād bhavam, Nep. MS tantraṇodbhavam.

66 ācārya] MS^{ac}: MS^{pc} ācāya.

67 api mukhyāsambhave] Nep. MS: RAS MS abhimukhādyasambhave.

68 adhimokṣāyogāt] em.: MS adhimokṣayogāt.

69 °sahajaṃ] MS: TibI om.

mahāsukhena gurūpadeśataḥ punaḥ punar asyārcanaṃ⁷⁰ kāryam
iti siddhāntaḥ|

tatra prajñāṅgasāṅge sahajamahāsukhasya yat sthīrīkṛtya lakṣa-
ṇaṃ tat prajñāṅgāśrayatvāc cetasaḥ prajñājñānābhiṣeka ity ucyā-
te| yat punaḥ sthīrīkṛtasya sahajamahāsukhasya yathāśakti samā-
hitena manasā sarvāṅgapratyaṅgavyāpanaṃ viśvavyāpanaṃ ca vi-
śvasya ca tanmayīkaraṇaṃ tat prajñājñānavad advayam ajalpaṃ
mahāsukhamātrapratibhāsam ataḥ so 'pi cetasa evābhiṣekaś

caturthaṃ tat punas tathā (GST 18.113f again)

ity anena nirdiṣṭo veditavya iti manyante|

yādṛśaś cāyaṃ sahajamahāsukhayogo yādṛśaś cāsyā samayo ya-
thā cāyaṃ bhāvanīyaḥ sa sarvaḥ sahasasādhane hevajrād uddhṛte
'smadgurubhiḥ sphuṭaṃ⁷¹ abhihita⁷² iti neha pratanyata iti| idaṃ
ca sarvaṃ samāhitena guruṇā śiṣyasya prajñājñānābhiṣekakāle tā-
dṛśīm avasthāṃ saṃketena samupalabhya

idaṃ jñānaṃ mahāsūkṣmam (HT II.xii.4a)

ityādigāthāpāṭhena tattvaṃ pratipā[f45r]danīyam ity āmnāyah||

prajñājñānābhiṣekasya prabhedā lakṣyalakṣaṇāḥ|
trayaḥ proktā nirūpyātra yukto grāhyas tu paṇḍitaiḥ||
śrīsamāje sphuṭaṃ tāvad eṣā sekavyavasthitiḥ|
tantrāntare⁷³ 'nusartavyā mudrātattvānusārataḥ||
śrīsamāje 'tha hevajre proktā bhedās turīyake|
abhiṣeke tathaivātra yukto grāhyo manīṣibhiḥ||
tantradvayānusāreṇa tattantrasamayair api|

70 asyārcanaṃ] Nep. MS: RAS MS abhyarthanaṃ; cf. TibI. bstan par bya
ba, *prakāśita/*saṃvarṇita.

71 Not in TibI, and more remarkably 'taught by me' instead of
asmadgurubhiḥ, because this translation, or more probably an earlier stage of
the transmission, attributes the present text to Ratnākaraśānti himself, which
in turn explains the literally false modesty of omitting the 'clearly' taught.

72 abhihita] Nep. MS: RAS MS abhimata.

73 tantrāntare] em.: MS tatrāntare.

uktaṃ sarvaṃ tu vijñeyaṃ yoginīyogatantrayoḥ ||
 caturthasya tu ye bheda yuktyāgamabahiḥkṛtāḥ |
 dūṣitās te na saṃlikhya mayā vistarabhīruṇā ||
 teṣu teṣu pradeśeṣu tān samīkṣya vipaścitā |
 dātavyaṃ dūṣaṇaṃ tatra yuktyāgasamanvitam ||
 abhidadhatā tattvam idaṃ puṇyaṃ yad avāpi paramasekasya |
 jīnasujayaśrīguptaṃ jagad idam akhilaṃ tato bhavatāt ||

abhiṣekaniruktiḥ samāptā ||

kṛtir iyaṃ paṇḍitasujayaśrīguptapādānām || ||

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74 rim par P: D nges par

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⁷⁶ Mark TATZ is not named as author of the article. The only name given is: 'Advayavajra a.k.a. Maitrīgupta, Maitrīpa'. The article has apparently also appeared, with some changes, as 'Philosophical Systems according to Advayavajra and Vajrapāṇi.' in: 'Journal of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies' 1 (1994), pp. 65–120, but I have been unable to trace this reference.

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